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From Innocence

by [TheSoundOfThunderstorms](#)

Summary

From innocence to something more.

Notes

So I had a bare bones outline for this story on my phone before I even started writing Blood and Cities. It's not going to be as long as that story. I took the time to make a more fleshed out outline so I now have all seven chapters planned out. It won't be long before I finish this one. Anyway, I hope you enjoy.

One

“Mama!” A younger Fareeha ran up to her mother taking a nap on the couch. She was lying on her back underneath a cotton blanket, a foot poking out from the bottom, her right hand touching the floor. The arm that was covering Ana’s face was lifted slightly, the woman having woken up from Fareeha’s call. She peaked an eye at the running form of her daughter and smiled at the excitement on her face.

Ana sat up in the couch and made room for Fareeha to sit. She yawned a bit and rubbed the sleep from her eyes. By the time Fareeha sat on the couch, Ana was mostly awake. She reached out and mussed her daughter’s hair. “What’s got you so excited?” She smiled when Fareeha hastily pulled out a piece of paper she had stuffed in her pocket.

“I need your help to make this.” She gave her mother the crinkled paper. “I would ask uncle Torb but he might spoil the surprise.” She gave her mother a serious look. “I’m counting on you mama not to say anything about this before I can give it to her.”

Ana listened to Fareeha as she studied the piece of paper. It was a comic the younger girl had drawn. The contents had her grinning from ear to ear. It featured Fareeha and her crush in a very romantic gesture. When she finished the rather adorable comic, Ana flipped the paper and saw the plans for what Fareeha wanted to make. It was rather detailed and Ana was impressed.

“So? Will you help me?” Fareeha had a hopeful sparkle shining in her eyes.

Ana looked down from the paper and gathered up the girl quickly. Fareeha yelped when she planted a kiss on her cheek. “Of course I’ll help you.” She lifted the blanket and covered the both of them in it. “Only on one condition.”

Fareeha turned in her mother’s arms to try and look at her face. “What do I need to do?” She seemed determined to do anything her mother asked.

“Since you woke me up, I need help getting back to sleep.” Ana shifted the both of them under the blanket so she was in the same position before waking up, with Fareeha on top of her.

Fareeha snuggled up closer to get comfortable. “I can do that.” She wrapped an arm around her mother and closed her eyes. “Thank you mama.”

Ana looked at the paper one last time before placing it on the floor and putting her arm over her eyes again to block the light that seeped from the curtains.

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Angela was in her lab in the London Overwatch base. The recall happened over a month ago, the doctor having been reluctant to answer the call due to the work she was doing in the middle east. When she finally gave in, Angela learned that Winston had set up operations at the old London base and so here she was setting up a new experiment in her new/old lab after a week of settling in.

“Athena, I want observations recorded every twenty minutes for the next twenty four hours.” Angela added another solution to the nanite filled petri dishes before closing them and stepping away from her work.

“Understood.” A soft blue light scanned the petri dishes. “First observation cataloged.”

Angela took off her gloves and disposed of them in the medical waste container. She picked up her holo-pad before leaving the lab, heading for the medical bay on the other side of the hall. On the way there, she flipped through patient records she had on file. Winston's genetic therapy was still going well, the ape having joked about the only side effect being an addiction to peanut butter.

One of the new recruit's, D.va, had just finished her routine examination yesterday. She was a healthy and fit soldier although... How Winston managed to convince the South Korean army to lend them one of their top MEKA pilots was still mind boggling to the doctor. She shook her head in wonder before walking into the med bay.

Angela sighed when she saw the state of the med bay again. It had the basics needed for routine checkups but lacked in everything else. She didn't even have a single bandage should someone come in with a paper cut. Winston had ordered a medical supplies shipment that was due to come in any day now. In the time between waiting, Angela had crossed her fingers in hopes that no one got any injuries while training. So far it seemed to work, or at least Angela had convinced herself that it was working.

She sat down on the single swivel chair situated in the back office of the med bay. She flicked through some more patient files before getting an alert on her communicator. Winston's voice rang clear when she answered the call.

"Good afternoon Angela. I hope now's not a bad time."

"Not at all Winston. Is there something you needed?"

"I just wanted to tell you that the shipment will be here in a few minutes."

"That's wonderful news Winston. I'll be at the unloading dock soon." She was just about to get up to leave when Winston spoke again.

"Ah well, the shipment is actually being delivered by our newest recruit. She's coming from Helix Security International. I managed to get a contract with them. I was hoping you'd welcome her. Lúcio and D.va will be there to help as well.

Angela smiled at Winston's surprising ability to negotiate. "I'll be sure to give her a warm welcome. What's her name?" Angela stood up and started to head out of the med bay.

Winston paused for a moment. "Her agent name is Pharah."

Angela hummed at the information. "Well alright Winston, I'm heading over to greet her." She ended the communication and continued on her way.

When Angela arrived at the loading bay she arrived to quite a sight. There was a tall armored figure standing at the cargo bay entrance with D.va hanging off their left bicep. The armor was a shade of blue, jets in the shape of wings sticking out from behind. The helmet obstructed Angela's view of the person. When she got a little closer she could see the figure lift the younger girl with no problem. Lúcio was off to the side cheering them on.

The armored figure laughed and Angela realized that was the person she was supposed to be greeting. Walking up to the trio Angela introduced herself. "Hello there. You must be Pharah. I'm Mercy, but you can call me Angela."

Before Pharah could answer D.va spoke out next. "Are you seeing this Angela? Look how far off the ground I am!" The girl was lifted again. "I'm going to like having her around." She finally let go and dropped to her feet. "That was awesome."

Pharah tried to speak again but Lúcio starting speaking. “Aren’t we supposed to be unloading this stuff?” He pointed to the ship.

Pharah cleared her throat, gaining everyone’s attention. “If you’d follow me, we can start unloading.” Pharah started to lead the way. When they got to the supplies D.va and Lúcio ran in ahead, Pharah hanging back to talk to Angela. “That was quite the greeting I received.” She gestured to D.va. “The first thing she asked me was if I could lift her in my Raptora armor. She said that she heard about them online and wanted to see if I was ‘wickedly strong’ since I pilot one.”

Angela had furrowed her brow. She heard that accent before but she just couldn’t pinpoint exactly where. She pushed back her thoughts and focused on the woman beside her. “From what I’ve seen, I’d say that’s a yes.” They reached the supplies and Angela started loading the crates onto the hovercart D.va and Lúcio were using. She’d look over to Pharah and was impressed that the woman took the crates in stacks of two or three. Even more impressed that she managed to avoid tripping since the crates must have blocked her view.

By the time they were done unloading the supplies, they had filled two hovercarts. D.va and Lúcio took one and started pushing it to the med bay. Pharah took the other cart and started pushing it herself. It looked effortless.

D.va and Lúcio had disappeared out of sight but Pharah seemed to know where she was going. “You don’t look like you need it but I suppose it’s rude to not ask. Would you like any help pushing that?”

Pharah smiled but continued to push. “That won’t be needed. Thank you for offering.” She turned the corner and headed straight for the med bay. Angela was too caught up in getting new supplies to really notice that Pharah did not need any directions.

When they arrived, D.va and Lúcio had already unloaded the crates from their cart onto the ground. They were leaning against the stacked crates talking to each other until Pharah and Angela arrived.

“Hey doc,” started Lúcio. “We didn’t know where you wanted everything so we just waited for you to show up.” D.va nodded in agreement.

“Don’t worry about it. I’ll get everything sorted. There’s no need to stay.” Angela gave the two a grateful smile. “I appreciate the help.”

D.va gave the doctor an unsure look but then after a while she shrugged her shoulders and started for the doors. “If you say so. See ya.” She left and didn’t look back.

Lúcio was not so easily convinced. “Are you sure you don’t need help?” He gestured to all the crates. “This is a lot of stuff.”

Angela waved it off. “It’s quite alright. I prefer it this way so I know exactly what’s where.”

Lúcio gave in and head out as well. “I’ll see you around then. Good luck with that.” He looked over to Pharah before leaving. “It was nice meeting you.”

With just the two of them left, Angela and Pharah started to unload the crates from the cart, Pharah unloading twice as many in half the time. When they were done, Angela leaned against the crates and regarded Pharah.

“You know, what I said before extends to you as well. Especially since you’re new here. I’ll be fine putting everything away.”

Pharah smiled. "But I'm staying. You always were stubborn when it came to your med bay." She took off the helmet and continued. "Besides, I'd like to catch up."

Angela widened her eyes in shock. "Fareeha?" She snapped her fingers in recognition. "I knew I recognized that accent."

"It's good to see you too Angela."

The doctor pouted. "Look at you in all that armor! I can't give you a proper greeting like that."

Fareeha smiled at Angela's concern. "Well, now that I'll be here for a while, I'm sure we'll find plenty of time for hugs later."

Angela waved a finger. "You better be on the lookout for that hug. As soon as you're out of that thing, come find me."

"Alright, it's a deal."

They smiled at each other and started to open the crates to unload the supplies.

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The next morning, Fareeha had arrived for her medical evaluation appointment. The night prior, Angela had sent Fareeha a notification to see her in the med bay for her medical evaluation. The doctor was looking through Fareeha's medical records from Helix when she heard the doors open up.

"Ah, Fareeha right on time." She gestured to the examination table. "Take a seat. I'll start in a moment." She could see Fareeha head towards the exam table from the corner of her eye. Angela returned her focus on the data pad in her hand. The wound in Fareeha's right shoulder documented two months prior was concerning. Putting down the data pad, Angela pulled on some hypoallergenic gloves and started the examination.

During the examination Fareeha didn't say much. Angela noted she mostly smiled and complied with whatever was asked of her. She answered all Angela's questions without hesitation, occasionally adding in the odd pun or two. "My, my Fareeha. Soldiers are usually more stubborn than this."

"I don't like to give my doctor a hard time."

Angela squinted her eyes in suspicion. "We'll see about that." She pointed to the woman's shirt. "I'll need you to take your shirt off."

Fareeha widened her eyes slightly but swiftly reeled in her change of expression. She quickly took off her shirt and set it behind her. Angela noted the way her eyes would flicker between her lap and the doctor. She started fiddling with her thumbs and the smile she wore got smaller. Angela smirked; Fareeha knew what she was getting at.

"First I'll just check your breathing and heartbeat." Fareeha didn't flinch when the cool metal of the stethoscope touched the skin of her back. Angela noted an increased heart rate; Fareeha was getting nervous. "Lie back please."

The soldier complied and Angela checked her abdomen with gentle touches and slight pressure. "Are you feeling any discomfort where I've applied pressure?"

Fareeha shook her head no. "No discomfort doctor."

Angela nodded at that. "Alright, you can sit up now." Fareeha nearly bolted up and reached for her shirt. "Ah, ah. I never said I was done." She pointed to Fareeha's right shoulder. "The shoulder." Her smile widened when Fareeha's expression deflated.

Fareeha sighed but gave the doctor a determined look. "My shoulder feels fine. It healed a month ago." She lifted her arm slightly and started moving her shoulder a bit. "See? No pain."

Angela smirked at the display. "We'll see." She moved behind the woman and started to apply slight pressure to the area. "Any pain?"

Fareeha shook her head no. "None. See I'm fi-" She grimaced when Angela increased the pressure. "I'm fine."

"That didn't sound like fine." Angela walked around to the woman's front. "Start lifting up your arm. I'll tell you when to stop." She watched as Fareeha started lifting her arm up slowly. She noticed Fareeha significantly slowed down when her arm was shoulder level. Eventually she stopped before Angela said to, she noted the slight discomfort shown on her face.

"Fareeha..." The other woman wasn't looking at her. "You can put your arm down." Fareeha lowered her arm but still avoided her gaze. "Fareeha, it's okay." She handed the other woman her shirt. "This doesn't have to be a big deal if you cooperate. Now tell me what's going on with your shoulder."

After putting on her shirt, Fareeha returned her gaze to the doctor. "I got hit with modified armor piercing rounds two months ago." She took a deep breath and continued. "I've had several nanite injections but it still hurts."

Angela understood why the other woman was so nervous now. "You're worried that this will be cause for dismissal." Fareeha nodded. "Well, I'm not always a miracle worker but..." She watched Fareeha's expression change to a hopeful one. "This shouldn't be a problem. I have a more potent injection I can give you. It should fix your shoulder and the pain will be a thing of the past."

Fareeha jumped down from the table and enveloped Angela in a hug. "Thank you, Angela." She leaned back a bit to look at the doctor's face. "This means so much to me."

"Don't get too excited now. I still need to stick you with some needles." She grinned when Fareeha gritted her teeth.

"How could I forget about my favorite part?"

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A few months after Overwatch operations began, Winston had noticed how well Pharah and Mercy worked together. In the middle of a mission Mercy could reach Fareeha with ease. The height advantage gave the doctor a convenient escape route when she found herself in danger. Then there was the added bonus of being able to fly. Angela would fly with Fareeha during missions sometimes for the sheer enjoyment of being airborne. The two protected the skies together and so Winston decided it was best to keep Pharah and Mercy paired up.

Mercy looked up into the sky to check if Pharah was alright. Her assigned partner was patrolling the area, making sure her teammates weren't in any immediate danger. When she saw Pharah was still okay, she focused back on patching up McCree.

The man had gotten hit in the side. He moaned and groaned the whole time Mercy was treating him. “Give it to me straight doctor. Am I gonna live?”

“Oh hush up McCree.” She lifted her staff away from the self-proclaimed cowboy. “You’re fine now.”

Getting up from his sitting position he stood up. “Well I’ll be.” He patted his side. “I’m gonna make it after all.”

A loud explosion resounded from the left of the demolished building they were situated in. “We’ve got hostiles coming in from the left and behind of my position.” Pharah’s voice rang through the communication line. “D.va I want you and Tracer to intercept the ones from behind.”

“Aye aye!”

“Roger that.”

Mercy saw Pharah looking down at her and McCree. “I’ll head to the left where the explosion came from with Mercy and McCree.” Mercy flew up to Pharah and McCree followed them from the ground. “McCree and I will push the hostiles back, that should give you some time to look for any trapped civilians Mercy.”

When they arrived at the explosion sight, Mercy drifted down to the ground and started searching for any survivors. The flames from the explosion had her on edge. She didn’t know if her staff had enough nanites to treat multiple burn victims.

The first person she found was huddled behind a flipped over table, the man had a bag of groceries wedged between his shoes. She extended out her hand to the scared man. “Come with me. I’ll get you to safety.” The man took the extended hand and with his groceries in his other hand, they got out of the explosion sight.

Mercy found other’s in the same fashion. All the while, in the distance, Mercy could hear Pharah’s rockets going off, the sound getting less frequent as the threat dwindled.

When she returned to the explosion sight after her last trip from the makeshift shelter, the sounds of gunfire had ceased. Mercy took one last look around before setting her eyes on an overturned hover car. She squinted a bit and saw some movement. A second later, a small child came crawling out from under the car. He was too afraid to go any farther.

Mercy started to make her way over to him when a bullet whizzed right passed her. In a rush, she locked onto him with her Valkyrie suit and glided the rest of the way towards him. Pharah had dropped down to the ground and started to head towards the two.

From behind Pharah, Mercy could see a projectile headed straight for the woman. Without wasting any more time, she pointed up towards the air, Pharah getting the message and rocket boosting herself high in the sky. The Valkyrie suit locked onto Pharah, Mercy and the boy being propelled into the air moments before the car was hit.

The doctor twisted her body so that the shrapnel wouldn’t hit the boy. She felt several lacerations on her arms and back, a few pieces of metal cutting into her face. From her earpiece Mercy heard D.va talking over the coms.

“All hostiles eliminated. The area is clear. You guys okay? That was a bit too close.”

Mercy breathed a sigh of relief. “Pharah got us out of danger. I got a few cuts but I’ll be fine.” She pointed down towards the building all the other civilians were situated and Pharah started heading

down. “We’re going to head towards the rescued civilians. Once everyone is safe, we’ll be at the ship.”

“Copy that. I’ll get it started. D.va out.”

After Mercy and Pharah made sure the boy was safe with the rest, they left for the ship. When they got on, Pharah had started to take off the top part of her Raptora suit, the bulky wings making it uncomfortable to sit down on the long ride home. When she was done, Pharah took a seat and let out a sigh of relief. She closed her eyes and started to relax.

McCree had settled himself in a secluded corner of the ship, his hat placed over his face so the light wouldn’t bother him. Tracer had sat next to Hana at the controls, complementing the girl on her piloting skills.

Mercy took the seat next to Pharah, her wings pulled against her back so she could sit properly. She liked it when Pharah took off some of her armor. Usually, the trips weren’t long so the Raptora pilot would opt to stay in the suit and stand around until they got to base. She felt the conversation was better when she could see the other woman’s face.

“I’m glad there were no casualties.”

At the sound of the doctor’s voice Pharah opened her eyes and shifted to face Mercy. Her face morphed into a look of concern.

“Is there something wrong?” asked Mercy.

Pharah reached into one of her suit’s compartments and pulled out something. Mercy could see that it was an adhesive bandage. When Pharah unwrapped it, she smiled at the red smiley faces covering the bandage. “You’re bleeding.”

Mercy had noticed that the lacerations on her arms and back were already healed. Most of the cuts on her face were closed up as well. There was only one cut remaining. “I’ll be alright. The nanites will get to it soon.”

Pharah had already taken off the coverings to the adhesive. Next thing Mercy knew, she felt gentle hands applying the bandage to the cut on her face. Pharah traced her thumb over the bandage to make sure it stayed. Warm fingers lightly trailed along her cheek when the other woman pulled away. “For just in case.”

Mercy felt her face tingle, the sensation lasting long after the nanites healed the cut.

Two

Chapter Summary

Some little snippets of bonding time.

Chapter Notes

I was a little baffled because this chapter wasn't even 3000 words(I think longer chapters are extra delicious). But that's all I had in my outline so...Enjoy!

Ana had seen Angela sitting by herself at the mess hall. She quickly made her way over to the young intern and cleared her throat to get the blonde's attention. "It's good to see you Angela." She extended out her hand and waited for Angela to shake the offered hand.

Angela look confused but shook the older woman's hand anyway. "You as well Ana." The intern found that Ana had yet to let go of her hand.

Ana used her other hand to encase Angela's in both of her own. She squeezed their fingers together for a bit. She seemed to be contemplating something. Ana nodded her head after a bit and then let go of Angela's hand.

Suddenly she looked at her non-existent watch and bid her farewell. "Well would you look at the time. I'm late for my meeting." Ana quickly pulled out a piece of paper and jotted something down. Crumpling the paper in her pocket, she hurriedly rushed out of the mess hall leaving a confused Angela behind.

As it turned out, Ana did have a meeting. It was with Fareeha in Torbjörn's workshop.

Ana had managed to convince Torbjörn to leave his workshop an hour a day for the next five days in exchange for her assistance in testing out his latest inventions. Half of the time they ended up exploding. Ana wasn't looking forward to her side of the deal.

"Alright Fareeha, your mama went through great lengths to get you this time in uncle Torb's workshop. Use it well."

Fareeha saluted her mother. "I understand." She pulled out the crinkled paper and pointed to the color she used in her plans. "I want to use the gold."

Ana nodded in agreement. "I think that would look best." She took out the piece of paper she crammed in her pocket and handed it to Fareeha. "I got what you asked for."

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Angela started to notice a pattern in her behavior. But it was only after a while of subconsciously doing it.

After that last mission together, Angela found herself getting closer to Fareeha. She'd sit next to her during mission briefings and would take the spot next to the other woman when she was sitting on the couch in the common areas, finding the space operas Fareeha enjoyed watching very interesting.

It was one morning that Angela was up early when she found her office coffeemaker had run out of coffee to brew. Yawning, she headed towards the communal kitchen, the smell of food cooking drifting down the halls. Her eyes were barely open when she bumped into Fareeha. The other woman was making pancakes, nearly dropping her spatula when Angela bumped into her. The bowl of batter on the counter spilled over a bit, some of it getting on Fareeha's shirt.

"I'm so sorry Fareeha!" She straightened up immediately and no longer felt the pull of sleep. "I came here to get some coffee but I should have seen where I was going."

The other woman was looking down at her shirt, a finger wiping over some spilled batter. She looked up at Angela, having licked away the batter on her finger. "No need to apologize. I'm still wearing my pajamas."

Angela took a moment to regard Fareeha. She was wearing white pajama pants with blue birds printed on them. Her blue long sleeved shirt looked worn and faded, the fuzzy slippers completing the outfit. "So you are."

Fareeha had dappled a wet rag over the batter on her shirt before speaking again. She pointed with the spatula to the pancakes she was making. "Breakfast? I made tea but I can make coffee too."

Angela's stomach growled at the offer. "Breakfast sounds nice but I can make my own coffee. You seem busy with the pancakes."

Fareeha hummed at Angela's response. "Fair enough." She turned back to the hot pan and poured more batter in, the forming pancakes looking like perfect circles.

Angela's coffee didn't take long to make, she leaned against the counter and watched Fareeha continue to make pancakes while she sipped her drink. She noticed that the other woman made more batter and watched as the stack got bigger and bigger.

It was like Fareeha could read her mind. "I usually make some for Hana. She came in here one morning after streaming all night to get some coffee. I happened to be making pancakes and, well, now I make some for her too."

"That's really sweet of you. Does she wake up to eat them? Will she be joining up soon?"

Fareeha started to laugh. "Funny thing about Hana. She eats them cold."

Angela covered her shocked expression by taking another sip. The idea of eating cold pancakes was apparently mind boggling. "I suppose you learn something new every day."

Fareeha smiled at the comment. When she got to the last bit of batter she picked up the bowl and gestured for Angela to come see. "This is the part where I show my artistic side."

Angela quickly went to observe. She saw videos about pancake art but she's never met anyone who did it. Fareeha started pouring the batter and Angela giggled when a vaguely human shaped blob was formed. Her tongue was sticking out in concentration when she put the finishing touches to the blob.

"This one's me and..." She expertly crafted another human shaped blob that was slightly smaller. "That one is you."

“Fareeha, the resemblance is uncanny.” She giggled when Fareeha took a bow.

“Thank you, thank you. It took me years to perfect my craft.” Turning off the stove, Fareeha grabbed two plates from the cabinet and placed them on the table. Disappearing into the pantry, she reappeared with a bottle of syrup in hand. She took a detour to the steeping tea sitting on the counter, making herself a cup before continuing to the table.

When Fareeha sat down, Angela instinctually took the seat right next to her. She was handed a plate and immediately snatched the Fareeha blob pancake. “I’ll eat you first.”

Just as Fareeha took a sip from her cup, she nearly spit it all out, managing to keep most of it down as a slight dribble ran down her chin. After wiping off the tea from her chin, she looked at Angela from the corner of her eye to confirm that the blonde was indeed turning impossible shades of red.

Angela was staring down at her plate hoping the world would swallow her. She glanced up at Fareeha with wide eyes and tried to speak to no avail. “I…”

Fareeha took the syrup bottle and poured some syrup over the single pancake on Angela’s plate, pushing it closer to the doctor so she’d start eating. Angela picked up her silverware and began eating the pancake, the stunned look on her face taking its time to disappear.

When Angela finished the pancake, Fareeha casually reached out and put some pancakes on her own plate. Angela followed suit and after a short while of them both eating, Fareeha spoke up. “So did I taste good?”

Angela dropped her silverware on her plate and buried her face in her hands. She should have seen that coming. The sound of Fareeha’s laughter was contagious though, Angela finding herself joining in as well.

“I’m glad you bumped into me this morning. I usually eat breakfast alone since no one is up this early.” She took another bite. “I’m happy for the company.”

The embarrassment was gone and Angela finally found her voice again. “I’m usually up at this time as well. I just like to hide away in my office and read the latest research papers. So, I’d be happy to join you for breakfast from now on.”

“I’d like nothing more.”

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They got comfortable with each other.

Every morning, they ate breakfast together. Some days, Angela managed to persuade Fareeha to sit while she cooked. Most of the time some portion of the food got burned since Angela would always get distracted talking to Fareeha. The other woman didn’t seem to mind though. She said the burnt flavor gave the food a smoky character.

For a while, Angela just thought Fareeha was being nice about the burned food. But then she would find her swapping out Angela’s burned portion with her own unburned portion, Fareeha swearing up and down that she actually liked it.

There was one morning where Angela let Fareeha make her coffee.

According to the other woman, it was how all Egyptians drank coffee, Angela narrowed her eyes

at that. Fareeha change her statement when she saw the look, saying that it was how *some* Egyptians drank coffee.

She watched as Fareeha filled a mug with water, pouring the liquid into a small pot. She spooned in a couple teaspoons of coffee, mixing in the sugar, and a bit of cinnamon. Then they waited, Fareeha watching the pot like a hawk. When it was deemed frothy enough, Fareeha poured the coffee back into the mug she used and handed it to Angela.

“When you get to the coffee grinds, that’s it.”

So Angela drank the coffee, enjoying the unique, rich flavor. But then she nearly choked when she accidentally swallowed a mouthful of coffee grinds.

“I think this is where I stop drinking.”

Fareeha smiled and took the coffee cup. She looked inside the cup and stared deeply at the bottom.

Angela giggled at the focused look. “Fareeha, what are you doing?”

“I’m reading your fortune.”

“And what are the coffee grinds telling you?”

Fareeha beamed up at the doctor. “Clear skies ahead.”

Angela felt her heart skip a beat at the sincerity in her voice.

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On days where Angela was passed out in her office, she’d wake up the next morning warm in her bed, the faint memory of being carried the only thing she’d recall. It was only during one of their breakfasts together that Angela got a confession out of Fareeha.

Angela had yawned for the fifth time that morning. “Late night?”

Angela nodded between yawns. “Yeah but... Your arms must be getting tired from carrying me to bed all the time.”

“I’d never get tired from carrying you.”

Angela wore a proud smirk. “So it was you.”

Fareeha mentally recalled the last bits of their conversation before realizing what she said. She chuckled at Angela’s smart tactic. “You caught me.”

Angela sat back in her chair with a smug look. “Here I was thinking I’d have to try harder than that to get it out of you.” Fareeha shrugged her shoulders in response. “I appreciate the effort though. I like waking up in a bed.”

Fareeha’s smile was contagious.

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Whenever Fareeha went on a rare mission without her, Angela would leave a note in Pharah’s helmet. Most of the time it was a little doodle of Mercy telling Pharah to keep the skies clear for her.

Fareeha would come back from her mission and slip the doodle under Angela's office door, a continuation of the comic drawn on the back. Angela started to hang the drawings in her office, making a copy of one side so both sides of their little doodles were displayed on their Pharah and Mercy wall.

She'd sometimes catch Fareeha in her office looking endearingly at the drawings.

-

On nights where Angela was too stressed to work on anything, Fareeha would take her to the lounge and they'd talk about everything and nothing. She loved seeing the other woman smile and laugh, their effect causing Angela to do the same as well.

Sometimes Angela would seek to make the other woman blush during their night talks, using dirty tactics like recalling embarrassing stories of when Fareeha was younger.

"Do you remember that time you tried to put on Reinhardt's armor?" Her sly smile catching Fareeha off guard.

Fareeha groaned and tried to repress the red coloring her cheeks. "Don't remind me."

"Oh but I will." She chuckled when Fareeha buried her face in her knees. "We found you in Torb's shop waddling beneath that heavy armor. Your scrawny little arms barely lifted up the gauntlets." She started laughing and Fareeha's groans got louder. "We couldn't even see your face! There was just this little mop of hair poking out from the top, the armor looking like it was moving on its own."

Fareeha gave a shy smile when Angela was bent over in laughter. "A-and then you..." Angela wiped away the tear streaming down her cheek. "And then you tripped and came barreling out of the top."

"I'll have you know Angela, Reinhardt signed my poster of him after that. He addressed it to his 'Little Warrior'. I still have it." Fareeha gave a wide grin. "Him signing that poster was the second best thing of my childhood."

Angela cocked her head to the side. "And what was the first?"

Fareeha blushed again. "Maybe some other time."

-

Before long Angela realized what she was doing. She was deliberately seeking out the other woman at every opportunity she got. She was sitting at her desk when it dawned on her.

She was seeking her out because...*Because I like her. Because I have-* Angela shook the thoughts away. *Of course I like her. That doesn't mean I have feelings for her.* Angela nodded to herself. *We're just friends.*

As she continued working, the thought persisted. Every time she downplayed it, she'd think about it more. She stopped working again and spun around in her swivel chair to clear her head. *I will admit, she's wonderful. And kind. And she cares about me...* She stopped spinning in her chair. *But she cares about everyone. We're just friends.*

Angela got up from the chair and started pacing in her office. She stopped in front of the Pharah and Mercy wall, her heart swelling at the sight. She traced one of Pharah's doodles that read 'Next

time we'll keep the skies clear together.' She remembered how her heart raced the first time she read it.

The more she tried to convince herself that she didn't have feelings for the other woman, the more her thoughts pushed back. It got to the point where her chest ached at the denial.

She stopped pacing about and returned to her chair, her posture slumped over the desk. *It's no use. I have feelings for her.*

Three

Chapter Summary

Night skies and hot chocolate.

Fareeha was staring down at her creation. "Mama, are you sure it'll fit?"

"Yes, I'm sure." Ana ruffled Fareeha's hair in response. "Are you saying you don't trust mama?"

The girl pondered Ana's words for a minute. "I guess I do trust you. I just don't want to put the final design if it's not going to fit."

Ana sighed. "If you want... I can check again." A grin started to form when Fareeha nodded her head vigorously. "After this, you can't say mama never did anything for you."

Fareeha held up her right hand. "I promise I won't ever say you never did anything for me."

Ana ruffled Fareeha's hair on her way out. She headed straight for the med bay, walking into the office inside without knocking.

Angela was typing something when she nearly jumped out of her seat in fear of the sudden intrusion. When the young intern saw that it was Ana, she started to relax. "Ana, you scared me half to death. I was just entering in some data and then there you are. Just out of nowhere." She sat up straight. "What brings you to the med bay? Feeling sick?"

Ana just held out her hand. She raised an eyebrow when Angela was hesitant to grab it. "I'm not going to bite."

Angela took the offered hand. She shook it just in case that's what Ana wanted. "Isn't this a little too formal?"

Ana just squeezed their hands together like she did before. "Hmm." She took more time holding Angela's hand within her own hands. She was mouthing something to herself before letting go. "That's what I thought."

"Ana..." Angela tried to understand what was going on but failing. "I can't say I understand what it is you're doing. Is my hand important for something?"

Ana smiled. "Very important."

"Oh, well I'm glad I can help with whatever it is you need." She cocked her head to the side. "What exactly am I helping with?"

Ana just laughed and started walking out of the office. "You'll see Dr. Ziegler." Once again Angela was left confused and without answers.

When Ana found Fareeha again, the girl jumped up from her seated position on the floor. "So, will it fit?"

“Like I said before, mother knows best.”

-

Just talk to her.

This was the mantra that Angela recited in her mind for the past three weeks. During that time, whenever Angela would try to bring up how she felt to Fareeha, her plan would backfire. She'd get too nervous or she'd get distracted.

“Do I have something on my face?”

They were watching a movie together, only Angela wasn't really paying attention to what was playing on the screen.

Fareeha waved her hand in front of the doctor. “You there?” She smiled when Angela seemed to snap out of it.

“Mm, you said something?” Angela heard what she said, she was just hoping that Fareeha wouldn't ask the same question again.

“I was just asking if I had anything on my face. You were staring.” She started to wipe away the nonexistent substance from her face.

Angela giggled at the action. It was cute to see Fareeha worried over nothing. She reached out a hand and gently took Fareeha's, stopping her in her fruitless endeavor. “No, there's nothing on your face. I was just...” *Looking at your beautiful eyes.* “Staring off at nothing.” She cleared her throat. “Your head was just in the way of my stare down with the wall.”

Fareeha tilted her head to the side. “You could have told me you didn't like the movie. There are other movies we can watch or other things we can do.”

“No, no, no. That's not it. The movie is good. I just have some things on my mind.”

Fareeha paused the movie and brought all her attention on Angela. “Do you want to talk about it?”

Yes! Just talk to her. “I...” The concerned expression on Fareeha's face got her heart fluttering. “I was thinking about...” She tried to swallow her nerves. “us.”

“And what about us is on your mind?”

She tried to get the words out but they stayed lodged in her throat. Angela saw how patient Fareeha was. She felt that Fareeha would probably wait all night for her to find the right words. It didn't help that those deep, sincere eyes were holding her gaze hostage. She couldn't look away if she tried.

Her nerves got the better of her. “I was thinking that we don't practice together during the night. We should...” She almost lost the momentum in her lie when she saw the smile that was slowly overtaking the other woman's face. “...make time for it.”

Fareeha got up from the couch and extended her hand for the doctor to take. She pulled Angela to her feet before speaking. She looked excited and Angela couldn't help but smile in response. “That's actually a good idea. How about we go practice now?”

Angela felt the gentle squeeze of her hand and just nodded. *Not exactly what I wanted to happen*

but... Fareeha still held onto her hand as she led them to where their suits were stored. A warm tingling started traveling up her arm. *I won't say no to this.* She giggled when Fareeha nearly tripped over her own feet in her excitement.

-

That night they flew for hours.

They were sitting on top of a skyscraper, their feet dangling off the edge, hands behind them supporting the weight of their suits. They flew into the city to practice weaving in and out between the tall buildings but now Angela and Fareeha were enjoying the sights before going back to base. Most of the lights in the windows having been turned off hours ago, the dimmed lighting giving a better view of the night sky.

Angela watched as the light breeze flowed through black locks of hair, golden rings softly clinking in the wind. Fareeha had taken off her helmet some time ago, the wave of information blocking her view of the dark sky.

“Say Fareeha...”

The soldier still had her gaze fixed on the sky. “Hmm?”

“What does everything look like with the helmet on?”

Fareeha focused her gaze to Angela. She sat up and reached for the helmet, her gaze still on the doctor, a grin forming on her lips. “It should have aired out by now.” Her grin widened, gloved fingers tapping the top of her head and then gesturing to Angela.

Angela looked confused before it clicked. She raised her hands to the halo perched on her head, pulling it off slowly so it wouldn't get stuck in her hair. She placed the halo behind her, the thought of it falling off the building making her face scrunch up. Angela reached up and let her hair free, not even a moment passed between letting her hair down when Angela felt light touches pushing back the golden locks from her face. She blushed at the close contact, the cover of night hopefully hiding her red face.

Fareeha held up the Raptora helmet between them. “Ready?” When Angela nodded, she lifted the helmet above the blonde's head and gently pushed it down until it was on properly.

The first thing Angela noticed was that it smelled like Fareeha, more specifically her shampoo. The familiar smell of peaches making her feel more comfortable. She started to look around and noticed quite a few things that flickered across the screen. First, there was a dedicated fuel display in the lower right corner. She could see that they were at fifty-seven percent. The next thing she noticed was that whenever she scanned the buildings, their distances would flicker off to the side for a moment before disappearing. The lower left corner displayed wind speed and direction. Angela nodded and spoke the findings to herself in low whispers, the secrets to how Pharah navigated the skies so effortlessly slowly being revealed.

When she looked over to Fareeha, she couldn't help the smile that showed her teeth. The other woman was outlined in blue, her agent name displayed off to the side. Below her name, she could see that the visor displayed her external damage status. What really got Angela smiling was the added detail below the damage status. As she looked at Fareeha, she could see that her mood was displayed.

Angela took off the helmet and handed it back to Fareeha. “Fareeha, the helmet says that you're happy.” She giggled when Fareeha raised her eyebrows in mock shock.

“Really? I could have sworn I was mad at you for something.”

Angela narrowed her eyes at that. She looked at the other woman and pretended to study her for a moment. “You’re obviously lying. I can tell.”

Fareeha continued to play along. “Oh? How’s that?”

Angela nodded to Fareeha’s hands. “The helmet told me.”

Fareeha chuckled at Angela’s response. “Well I don’t need the helmet to tell me that you’re happy too.” She watched as Angela busied herself with putting her hair up again, obviously trying to hide her face.

Angela placed the halo back on and carefully stood up. “Sometimes I can’t help but be happy when I’m with you.” She held out her hand for Fareeha to take. “Fly with me?”

Fareeha quickly put her Raptora helmet back on. She stood up in one fluid motion and took the offered hand in her own. “Always.”

Together they ran off the edge, the feeling of freefalling making the adrenaline run through their veins. Fareeha grabbed Angela’s other hand, starting her jets when she felt both hands held securely in her own. There was a slight jerking motion but soon afterwards they were soaring through the air. Fareeha held their hands tighter together and started twirling them mid-air.

When they got back to base, Angela couldn’t keep the smile off her face. Even when they were sitting meters apart doing the mundane task of taking off their suits, Angela’s smile stayed persistent. Their night together was replaying in her mind, cool wind whipping past her head in the dark of night and Fareeha flying right beside her.

When she was down to nothing but her black flight suit, Angela looked over at Fareeha, her breath catching at the sight. The soldier had taken off just the top part of her suit like she occasionally did on long flights back. She had held onto the Raptora helmet with both hands, her upper torso leaned back against the wall. Fareeha’s head was tilted towards the ceiling, her eyes closed and her lips slightly parted. She looked so peaceful, her slow breathing having a calming effect on the doctor.

Fareeha seemed to notice Angela looking at her when she slowly turned her head towards her and peaked open eyes. Her mouth curled up at the corners, her eyes creasing ever so slightly. After a moment of regarding Angela, she shifted her head back and closed her eyes again, her lips still firmly set in a beautiful smile.

Angela felt the hammering of her heart in her chest, the mantra starting back up again.

Just talk to her.

-

Another week went by and Angela noticed that she saw less of Fareeha. They’d still have breakfast together and she would manage to catch her for some more night training but between that...nothing.

The doctor was currently sitting in her office pondering over this new detail. Her rational mind was telling her that the woman was probably busy with other things. It was reasonable to conclude that they couldn’t spend all their free time together. Still...

She spun around in her chair to try and clear her thoughts away. She stopped and sighed, the

spinning only causing her to get dizzy. Angela glanced at the time on her holo-pad. It was nearly midnight. *I should get to sleep. I can't seem to concentrate anyway.* She chuckled to herself. *At least, Fareeha won't have to carry me to bed tonight.*

Pushing her chair in, Angela started the trek to her room. The usual dim hallways were a familiar sight as she walked her practiced path. She nearly passed Fareeha's room when she stopped. *I can probably say goodnight.* She raised her hand to knock before hesitating. *She might be sleeping.* Angela let her arm drop down, taking a couple steps away from the door before she heard some laughter echoing from the room.

Curious she went back and actually knocked. In her wait, Angela heard a yelp coming from the other side of the door before she was face to face with Hana, the girl rubbing her elbow with a wince on her face.

Hana gave Angela an obligatory greeting before turning her head back to shout across the room. "Hey Fareeha, it's the doc."

Angela took a cursory glance behind Hana to see Fareeha crawling out from under a blanket fort. The woman was wrapped in the fluffiest throw she'd ever seen. She was scrambling to get up, nearly tripping over from keeping a carefully balanced mug from spilling over.

Fareeha handed her cup to Hana. "Watch my hot chocolate for a minute?" The girl seemed too eager to help.

"Yeah, sure no problem." Hana grabbed the cup and shuffled a few steps back. Once she was out of Fareeha's sight, she started taking sips from the cup, grinning devilishly at the doctor when Angela had a look of surprise plastered on her face.

Fareeha looked behind her to see what was so surprising, finding a shrugging Hana looking back at her with a schooled look of nonchalance. When Fareeha turned her attention back to the doctor, Hana lifted up a finger to her lips in a gesture of keeping quiet. Angela slowly nodded along and instead smiled up at Fareeha who was now leaning against the doorframe.

"I was just stopping by to say good night."

Fareeha gestured towards inside her room. "You can stay a while. Hana and I are having a sleep over. Last time it was her room, now it's my turn to be the host."

"I should be getting to sleep."

Fareeha gestured towards her room again. "You know, the bed *is* open. We made a bed of pillows on the floor to sleep on so no one will be using it tonight." She smiled at Angela's look of apprehension. "Sleep is kind of the most important part of sleep overs." She looked over her shoulder. "Isn't that right Hana?" The girl nodded in agreement. "See? We could talk for a bit, have some more hot chocolate that yours truly made, and then sleep."

"That does sound nice but maybe I'll join some other time." Angela felt some regret when she saw the look of disappointment flicker across Fareeha's face.

Fareeha seemed to recover quickly. She shuffled back to the blanket fort and pulled out a giant thermos. Grabbing a mug from one of her shelves, Fareeha filled up the cup with steaming hot chocolate. She closed the thermos and shuffled back to the doorway, finally holding the cup out to Angela. "Take some with you. It'll help you get to sleep faster."

Angela grabbed the cup noticing how Fareeha seemed to light up at the action. "Thank you." She started back away from the door. "Good night Fareeha." She waved behind the woman. "Good

night Hana.”

“Night doctor.”

“Good night Angela. Sleep well.” Fareeha watched as Angela continued on her way down the hallway. When she was out of sight, she closed the door and walked over to Hana. “Thanks for watching my cup.” Hana handed back the cup. It was empty. “Oh... That’s what you two were on about. There was more in the thermos.”

Hana shrugged her shoulders. “That would mean I’d have to open it.”

“Ah, yes. Of course. I nearly forgot.” Fareeha took her empty cup back to the blanket fort and sat down on the bed of pillows. She refilled her mug and started slowly sipping at the steaming liquid.

Hana took a moment to stare a bit at the door and then went to sit next to Fareeha. She picked up her empty cup that was off to the side, holding it up for Fareeha to fill it up.

It was about a week ago when Hana finally went through with her plan.

She was standing in front of Fareeha’s door for the past five minutes. Usually she’d have no problem with talking to people but right now, she was nervous. She was nervous but she was also determined. So Hana knocked on the door.

When she saw the door start to open, she almost lost her resolve. But Hana stood her ground. ‘Look alive soldier.’ Fareeha was standing in the doorway, a curious expression on her face. Hana blurted out the first thing that came to mind.

“I admire you.”

Fareeha furrowed her brow in confusion. “Hana-“

Hana was quick to cut off the other woman. She feared that any interruption would cause her to lose her nerve. “What I mean is that I look up to you. Out of everyone here, you’re it. They all respect you. I respect you. There’s this unspoken authority that you just naturally have, and no one ever questions it because you deserve it.”

She stopped to take a breath and continued. “And it’s not just that stuff. You’re nice. Impossibly nice. I like how you make all those lame jokes and the way you just know how to lift the tension when something bad goes down.” Hana felt her hands start to clam up. “You’ve never judged me on my looks and hobbies. You trust me. When we’re on a mission, you trust me. So what I really want to say is...”

Fareeha was patiently waiting for Hana to finish. She appreciated that. “We should hang out.” She wiped her hands on the fabric of her shorts. “Starting tonight. We can have a sleep over in my room.”

Fareeha regarded her for a moment. “Of course we can be friends Hana.” The girl blushed at Fareeha’s keen perception. “I have to say, no one’s ever complimented me like that.” She pointed a thumb to inside her room. “I have a few reports to send out but when I’m done, we can start that sleep over.”

Hana was nearly shaking from excitement. Her plan actually worked. “Don’t forget to bring all your pillows and blankets. You’re going to need them.” She started jogging down the hall, a faint ‘I’ll see you later’ echoing in her wake.

Hana smiled into her drink, giving herself a mental pat on the back for a job well done. If she was being honest with herself, Fareeha's friendship in the past week was more than she bargained for.

They'd cook lunch together. Fareeha trying recipes from South Korea because Hana was beginning to miss the taste of home. She'd teach the older woman how to play MOBA's and Fareeha would surprise her in her skill in retro gaming. This was even their second sleepover, the first providing the setting for them to get to know each other better.

Most importantly, Fareeha understood the pain of losing the people you served with, the things you see when fighting. It was only one day during that week that Hana felt herself slipping. Fareeha was there, and she knew exactly what to do. And that's when she knew she chose right.

She put down her cup and gave Fareeha a sly smile. "So tell me about you and Angela."

Fareeha also put down her cup, a blush forming on her cheeks. "Hana..."

"Come on, you can't tell me you aren't crushing on the doctor. I have eyes you know. You like to take care of people but you obviously have a bias towards Angela."

Fareeha looked down at her hands, her thumbs tracing shapeless patterns around each other. "I wish it was just a crush. It never really went away."

Hana's eyes widened in understanding. "Oh." She picked up her cup again. "I see."

"Yeah." She let out a sigh.

Four

Chapter Notes

This took me a little longer than expected. I get so easily distracted.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Hurry up Fareeha, she’s going to leave soon.” Ana stood in the doorway to Fareeha’s room, arms crossed with a smirk on her face.

Fareeha was hunched over her desk painstakingly carving into the metal that was supported on a makeshift stand. “She’s not leaving for another month mama. Stop trying to scare me.”

Ana walked behind her daughter, pinching a cheek when she was close enough. “One day you’ll blink and she’ll already be in Switzerland, never to see you again.” She gave an exaggerated sigh.

Fareeha brushed away her mother’s hand. Her eyebrows were furrowed and she puffed out her cheeks in a pout. “She said I could talk to her anytime I wanted.”

“I know she did.” Ana went back to pinching the same cheek. “Just trying to motivate you.” She released her hold and bent over to kiss it better. She settled for an arm wrapped around Fareeha’s shoulders and peered at the progress of the gift. “You’re not going to put anything on the outside?”

“I did. See?” Fareeha placed her engraving tool down and twirled the shiny surface around.

Ana took it off the stand to get a closer look. Her heart swelled at the Arabic lettering she spotted. “It’s beautiful Fareeha.”

-

Hana was sitting in the medbay. She idly kicked her legs against the exam table she was sitting on and tried her best to keep her patience.

Winston had relocated most of the agents to the Gibraltar base to spread their area of operations, him and a few others opting to stay in London to keep things going over there. She was glad Winston had the good sense not to separate the ‘dream team’ and also very grateful that she got to stay with her friend who happened to be in charge of their Gibraltar operations.

Hana sighed, readjusting her arm in its sling for the tenth time to offset the pinch of the needle sticking out of her arm. The last mission she went on before transferring ended up with her having a broken MEKA along with a broken arm. “Am I done here yet? Pharah said she’d fix my mech. Of course I told her they would have just sent a new one, she insisted anyway. I’m dying to see what’s she’s doing to it.”

Mercy checked the time on her holo-pad, glancing over to the nearly depleted nanite mixture in the IV. “Almost done. Another two minutes should do it.”

Truth be told, she was happy that Mercy was giving her an accelerated treatment, just the day

before the soldier couldn't move her fingers too much. She was just so anxious to see what was going on in the garage. *She might even put a rocket launcher in it.*

"Alright Hana, you should be good to go." Gloved hands expertly removed the needle from Hana's arm. "I'll see you here tomorrow morning at ten again okay?"

Hana absentmindedly nodded along as she carefully dropped down from the table. "Say Angela, do you want to watch Fareeha with me?"

"W-watch Fareeha?"

"Remember I said she's fixing my mech?"

Angela suddenly seemed very interested in her holo-pad. "I have a bit of work to do but..." Hana watched in anticipation as the doctor seemed to contemplate her next sentence. "How about I bring lunch?"

Hana wasn't disappointed in Angela's answer, she just had her reservations. "Oh uh." She cleared her throat. "That's good too."

Angela narrowed her eyes. "Do you have something to say?"

The soldier used her good hand to scratch at her head. "It's just that your food tends to have a... burned quality to it."

"I..." Angela blushed. "I know how to make sandwiches." Her voice tapered off at the end.

Hana was quick to try and fix the situation. "Don't worry about what I said. Make whatever you want. Fareeha likes it you know. If I don't eat it, she will. But you know, since I've been so hungry lately, I'll eat whatever you put in front of me." She started making her way to the door to make a quick exit. "Just swing by okay? We'd love to have you around."

Angela watched the young soldier scamper out of the medbay. She remembered the last time she *watched* Fareeha fix something. *I knocked all the tools over and I couldn't even speak when she used her shirt to wipe away the smudges on her face.* A shy smile appeared on her lips at the memory.

Angela shook *those* thoughts away. She walked over to her desk and sat down. "I can cook." Angela began tapping away at her computer. "I don't burn everything." She smiled to herself at all the shared meals she had with Fareeha. *She never complains.*

-

Hana was munching away at some chips as she watched Fareeha work on her mech. She'd occasionally hand the other woman a tool she couldn't reach and she had her eyes peeled for when Torbjörn tried to snoop around.

"Didn't you say Angela was coming around with lunch?" Fareeha stopped what she was doing to take a break. She settled for leaning against the leg of Hana's mech and reached for her water bottle. "You already ate half the bag."

Hana shrugged. She dug her hand deeper in the bag to reach for more decadent triangular bliss. "I've been feeling hungry lately."

"You mean more than usual?" Fareeha ducked when a chip was thrown her way.

“Angela said it was normal.” Hana stuffed some more chips in her mouth. “It’s a side effect of the accelerated treatment.” She lifted her broken arm up and wiggled her fingers. “See? I can move them now. All the extra hunger is worth it.”

Fareeha smiled. “I’m glad you’re getting better.”

They sat in silence until they heard someone enter the garage. Hana leaned over to see behind her mech, smiling when she saw Angela carrying a basket headed their way. “Right on time doc, I just finished my chips.” She held up the empty bag, waving it in the air for emphasis.

Angela walked over to Hana with a triumphant smile on her face. “I made pasta so nothing got burned.” She held the basket in front of her like it was her crowning achievement. Behind her, Angela heard a familiar laugh that made her heart flutter.

“You look so proud of yourself Angela.” Fareeha got up and dusted off her pants. “Do you need any help with that?” She pointed to the basket.

Angela didn’t say anything, she was too endeared by the sight before her to speak. Fareeha was covered in grease. There were black smudges all over her arms, the dark blue tank top she wore covered in dark spots as well. Fareeha’s hair had grown longer, so Angela had the pleasure of seeing the soldier with her hair pulled up. Not that Fareeha’s hair being down was bad either, so quite liked both. The point was that Angela could see the long streak of grease that extended from Fareeha’s face down to her neck. It was cute, criminally so. The fact that Fareeha didn’t seem to notice made it even cuter.

“You have something…” Angela gestured to her own neck to show where. She watched as the other woman lifted her fingers to wipe at the area, surprise on her face when she saw the black substance on her fingertips.

“Oh, I thought I got all the grease off my face.” Fareeha started to lift her shirt, surprised when a cool hand stopped her.

“Ah, let me.” Angela quickly put the basket down and pulled out a handkerchief from her pocket. The doctor knew what would happen if Fareeha finished what she started. She’d be damned if Hana saw her melt into a puddle before Fareeha.

Angela tried her best to swiftly wipe up all the grease, her face heating up from Fareeha’s gaze. She tried to put some humor into the mix to try to alleviate how flustered she had gotten. “My my Fareeha, you look as messy as Hana’s room.”

“I’m sitting right behind you.”

Angela wiped the last bit of grease on Fareeha’s face and turned around. “I didn’t hear you deny it.”

Hana just crossed her good arm and turned her head away. She eventually looked back when she felt two pairs of eyes on her. Her foot nudged the basket. “Let’s eat I’m hungry.”

Angela sat down, opening the basket to take out the plates and forks. “This was basically a one pot meal. There’s no meat in it though. Didn’t want to risk burning it.” She took out the container of food and started spooning the pasta mixture onto the plates, making sure to put more on Hana’s plate.

Hana immediately reached for her plate, desperate for more food. “Thank you.” She started eating, stopping only to compliment the chef. “It’s good.”

Fareeha took her time to get a bit of everything on her fork, spearing a cube of potato last to hold it all together. She took her first bite, smiling at Angela when she finished chewing. She went to gather another forkful but accidentally ended up flicking some on her face.

Angela tried to contain her laughter, a few giggles escaping as she pointed to her forehead. "You've got a little something."

-

By the next week, Angela noticed that Fareeha was unusually quiet. There was obviously something on her mind but when asked Fareeha would give her that impossibly beautiful smile and say she was just thinking. Of course Angela would get distracted, too caught up in how those smiles made her feel to realize that she'd forgotten all about her earlier question.

She was sitting in front of her computer in the medbay looking through the latest scans of Hana's arm when the young soldier piped up from her spot on the exam table.

"Do you think you could talk to Fareeha?"

Angela swiveled her chair around. "Talk about what?"

Hana seemed to think about her answer. "She's not talking much. I know you know something's up."

"I've noticed some things." Angela sighed. "What makes you think she'll talk to me about it if she's not talking to you about it?"

Hana seemed a little nervous at that. She averted her eyes. "I just have a feeling is all."

Angela turned back around, looking over the scans once more. "Your arm has healed perfectly. Let me know if you experience any pain." She heard Hana jump down to her feet. "I..". Hana paused in her exit. "I'll talk to her."

Hana mouthed a thank you, leaving with a pep in her step. Angela turned off the screen and took a deep breath. *I will not get distracted. I will not get distracted.*

-

Angela had agreed to talk to Fareeha but the problem seemed to be more in finding her. The doctor had checked her room, the common areas, the garage, Winston's out of use lab, the kitchen, most of the bathrooms, and even several closets. Nothing. *That leaves outside.*

She stepped out into the late day sun, using her hand to block the light from obstructing her sight. *I should have checked out here first.* Fareeha sat at the cliff's edge, her feet hanging off the side while the ocean breeze blew her hair to the side. *Don't get distracted.*

Fareeha didn't seem fazed when Angela suddenly spoke to her. "Still thinking?"

Fareeha smiled at the doctor, appreciative for the concern shown. "Yeah, still thinking." Her smile fell when Angela crossed her arms.

"Don't do that."

"Don't do what?"

"Don't give me that smile that makes it seem like everything's okay." Angela knelt down to join

Fareeha at the cliff's edge.

Fareeha suddenly seemed interested in her hands.

"You can talk to me but you don't have to." Angela reached out a hand, resting it on Fareeha's forearm. "Just know that I'm here for you."

They sat in silence, the ocean waves crashing against the rocks reminding Angela that time didn't suddenly stop.

"It's about my mother."

Angela squeezed her arm and waited for her to continue. She watched Fareeha reach into her pocket and pull out a folded piece of paper.

Fareeha handed the folded paper to Angela. "She wrote that to me."

Angela inspected the paper, carefully unfolding it to reveal that contents inside. "When did she write this to you?" She recognized some of the words, spotting Ana's name at the bottom.

"Before we left for Gibraltar."

Angela nearly crumpled the letter. "She's alive?"

Fareeha nodded, her eyes getting misty. "She wrote it all there. What happened and why she didn't come back." Fareeha covered the hand on her forearm with her own. "She was hoping that I'd understand. And the thing is, I *do*."

"But?"

"There's a difference between *knowing* she's alive and seeing her alive."

Angela seemed to understand. "She's coming here."

"She sent a message that's she's coming and suddenly I don't know how to feel about it anymore. Before, with just knowing she's alive, I understood why she left. But now, now that I know that I can see her soon, I can't think about it objectively anymore. She was gone Angela."

Fareeha wiped at her eyes. "She was gone for seven years having everyone believe she was dead. The pain of burying an empty casket. The pain of feeling so alone when everything felt so overwhelming. The ache in my heart when I'd think about her, knowing she wasn't coming back. That was all real. It *hurt*. And now that she's coming back, all those feelings started spilling out."

Angela started rubbing Fareeha's back, bringing her closer when the tears started rolling down her cheeks. "Fareeha."

"So there's a part of me that's hurt. There's a part of me that *she* hurt." Fareeha started to shake. "But more than anything, I just want her back." Her voice strained. "I just want her back."

Fareeha buried her face in the crook of Angela's neck, bringing the two of them down so they were lying on the ground. Angela just held her tighter, waiting as long as Fareeha needed.

-

Two weeks later, Fareeha was pacing near the base's entrance. By this time, everyone knew that Ana was coming, Fareeha telling the others a couple of days after she talked to Angela.

Hana stood next to Angela in front of the small gathering. She had watched her friend pace for the past fifteen minutes, the nervous energy rubbing off on her. She leaned over to Angela to whisper in her ear. "What time did Ana say she was coming again?"

"She said some time around noon," Angela whispered back.

"Well, it's nearly one. Did she say it was *today*?"

Angela went to whisper back but she stopped when Fareeha paused in her pacing.

The doors to the base opened and a much older looking Ana walked in. Her hair was completely white, the eyepatch on her face illustrating the story from her letter.

Fareeha took tentative steps towards her mother, reaching out a hand to trace the side of her face. Her eyes started to water, a single tear running down her cheek. Ana went to wipe it away, surprise etched on her face when she was enveloped in a tight hug.

"Welcome back."

Ana closed her eye and hugged Fareeha tighter. "It's good to be back."

-

A week after Ana came back Angela began to notice something. At first, she wasn't so sure about it but as time went on the situation became clear. It started with breakfast.

The breakfasts they shared now included Ana. Of course Angela didn't mind but she found that most of Fareeha's attention was now on her mother.

Angela walked into the kitchen, her eyes barely open. A warm mug was pressed into her hands, Angela making the connection that it was Fareeha giving her coffee. She yawned out a sleep-ridden thank you on her way to the table.

"Mother made breakfast so I was just on tea duty," said Fareeha. "Obviously that's coffee, I made that for you."

Ana placed a plate in front of Angela, the food steaming and smelling wonderful. "Fareeha used to be really bad at making tea." She sat down and sipped from her cup. "But this is actually really good." Ana eyed her daughter from above her cup. "You need to tell me Fareeha, when did the tea making genes finally kick in?"

Angela smiled as Fareeha told the surprisingly complex story, her body waking up more as she finished the coffee. She grinned when Fareeha blushed from Ana's praise. She picked up her fork and ate, listening to the banter between the two.

As the minutes ticked by, Angela found that her smile started to fade. All her attempts at talking to Fareeha were intercepted by Ana, the older woman taking up her attention. By the time everyone was finished with breakfast, Fareeha had left to start her day and Angela was left with Ana calmly sipping her third cup of tea.

Angela eyed Ana from the side. By all means, she shouldn't be jealous.

But she was.

-

When it came to spending their free time together, Fareeha was either nowhere to be found or quickly swept away by Ana.

Angela stood with sweat running down her brow. She smiled at the form of Fareeha running off to find the lost shuttlecock that was accidentally overshot. Fareeha had shown an interest in learning how to play Badminton and for the last 20 minutes they were outside separated by a makeshift net going over the basics.

Fareeha came back, her arms crossed and eyes narrowed. "You did that on purpose."

Angela shrugged her shoulders, a devious grin on her face. "The wind must have carried it that far." She gracefully returned the shuttlecock that headed straight for her. "Seems like that was on purpose."

Fareeha went to return it but missed. She rested the racquet on her shoulder, eyeing where the shuttlecock landed. "Must be the wind." The sound of doors opening caught her attention. She waved when she saw Ana walking towards them.

"I'm sorry to interrupt." Ana approached Fareeha. "Could you come look at something for me? It shouldn't take long."

Fareeha gave Angela a guilty look.

"It's okay. We can pick up where we left off later." Angela gave a reassuring smile.

"Don't worry Angela it shouldn't take long." Ana looped an arm through Fareeha's and started leading them towards the base. "She'll be back before you know it."

Angela watched them go, her thoughts stuck on whether or not she saw Ana smirking as they went inside the base. She walked over to where the shuttlecock landed, picking it up and tossing it in the air. When her racquet connected, the shuttlecock went flying, Angela having hit it as hard as she could.

They never came back.

-

Since the relocation to Gibraltar, everyone started having dinner together. They'd switch off on cooking and pass the time away telling stories. Fareeha stopped going when Ana came back. The two of them using the time to take a walk. They'd eat a late dinner when they got back, talking well into the night when they finished eating. Sometimes Angela would walk pass them during one of their late dinners. She'd puff up with jealousy at the sight. Angela tried to reason with herself. Ana and Fareeha had a seven year gap to fill.

As the days went by, she wanted to kick reason off a cliff.

Angela had cooked that day, Hana groaning when she walked by the kitchen to see the doctor handling a food dish.

"There's food in the refrigerator if you don't want to eat what I made."

Hana slumped her shoulders. "No... I'll eat it." She sighed. "I'm too tired to make anything." She sighed again. "I was hoping that Torb cooked today."

Angela grabbed one of the food dishes and headed for the tables. "Come on, it's not that bad."

Hana took the other food dish and followed. “I guess. Once you scrape off the burned bits.”

McCree, Torbjörn, and Reinhardt were already sitting together. Reinhardt’s laughter made the food dish vibrate in Angela’s hands.

Before she sat down, Angela saw Ana with Fareeha heading out for their nightly walk. Ana turned her head back and locked eyes with Angela, a devious smirk plastered on her lips. Angela’s jaw dropped. *She’s...*

The doctor sat down and took a moment. All the events over the past week clicking into place. It took her a minute to actually close her mouth after the realization.

“You okay Angela?” Hana scraped off the burned bits of her vegetables. “You’re looking a little lost.”

Angela snapped out of it and scooped some food onto her plate. “Yeah, I’m fine.” She wasn’t. “I was just thinking about something.” She took a bite of the food, not even registering the burned notes of flavor in her silent rage. *She’s doing it on purpose.*

Chapter End Notes

Oh Ana, what game are you playing at?

Five

Chapter Notes

I put the young Fareeha flashback at the end and I hope the mission flashback isn't too confusing.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Hana stared down the scope of the rifle, concentrating her sights on the other end of the shooting range. A coin came falling through, she took aim and her finger squeezed the trigger. Missed. The coin clattered against the ground unscathed.

“Damn.” Hana brought her head up from the scope. “Missed again.”

Ana walked up from behind, appearing next to Hana silently. “You almost had it.”

“That’s the seventeenth coin. I missed all of them.”

“Okay picture this. You are the coin. You know exactly where you’re going to land. You know how long it will take you. The coin is a part of you. Find yourself and you find the coin.” Ana nodded at her own words.

“That doesn’t make any sense.”

The older woman motioned towards the rifle. “Just try it.”

Hana looked back to Fareeha who was going over reports while half paying attention. She seemed to notice some eyes on her and met Hana’s gaze. Hana gave an exaggerated shrug and gestured towards Ana and the shooting range.

Fareeha smiled and looked back to her reports. “Be the coin Hana.”

With a huff, she got back into position and peered through the scope again. Leveling her breathing, she became calm and focused. “Ready.”

Another coin dropped. Brown eyes tracked the coin’s descent. She concentrated hard on the falling piece of metal, keeping a steady grip on the rifle. *It’s almost like...* A sharp ping echoed through the shooting range, the coin imbedding into the ballistic rubber of the wall. Hana straightened up in surprise. She balled her fist and punched into the air. “I am the coin!” The young soldier grinned when she felt a pat on her back.

“Makes sense now?” asked Ana.

Hana nodded vigorously. “Crystal clear.”

“Well, now that you’re on your way to becoming a legendary sniper, let’s go eat. I made some sandwiches this morning.”

Hana perked up at the mention of Ana’s sandwiches. “Please tell me they have that cheese on them.” She started walking towards the exit, Ana in tow.

“Of course they do.”

Fareeha took another minute to scribble something down on one of the reports and followed along, her nose still buried in her tablet. She didn't notice that the doors to the med bay were open, getting startled when Angela called to her out of nowhere.

“I'm so sorry. I didn't think that would scare you.”

Fareeha rubbed at the back of her neck. “Don't worry about it. I was too absorbed in these reports.” She waved the tablet in the air for emphasis. “So did you need something?” Fareeha leaned against the doorway.

“Well, I saw you walk by and I just wanted to show you my latest finding. That is, if you have the time.”

“Mother made some sandwiches but I can always eat some later. What did you want to show me?”

Angela's eye twitched at the mention of Ana but she kept it to herself. She started walking towards one of the doors inside the med bay. “Follow me.”

The new room they walked into looked more like a testing facility. Angela led them to the room off to the side, the giant wall of glass showing some cages placed atop the counters inside. “I was testing out one of the nanite mixtures I was experimenting with and found out the cutest thing.” She picked up a pair of gloves and put them on, grabbing a glass bottle and squeezing some of the liquid into a pipette.

“Cute?”

Angela nodded. “Well, I think it's cute.” She walked up to one of the cages and hovered the pipette in one of the cages. A plain white mouse scurried over and eagerly started to drink the liquid that was slowly dripping from the pipette. “Just watch.” She started lifting the dividers that led to the other cages, the other mice rushing to the plain white one. They started snuggling up to the white one and soon a big pile of nestled mice formed, keeping close contact with the mouse in the center. “They like him now! I found that the others want to stay close, showing signs of affection where previously there were none.” Angela turned towards Fareeha. “Cute right?”

Fareeha pointed to the glass vial. “So with this stuff you can essentially play cupid?”

“Ah well, since I don't know the effect this mixture can have on humans, based on my observations I can only assume that maybe whoever drinks it will at least have more friends.”

Fareeha peered back towards the bundled-up mice. “That is cute.”

Angela reached into the cage and started separating the mice. Fareeha noticed that the others would try to stay as close to the white mouse as they could, pressing their bodies into the cage dividers to do so.

When Angela was done, she pulled off the gloves and disposed of them. “So, that's what I wanted to show you. It was an unexpected find but maybe one day it will find a use.” She started leading them back into the med bay. “I won't keep you. I just wanted you to see that.”

“Aren't you hungry Angela?” Fareeha pointed to the open doors. “I'm sure mother made plenty of sandwiches.”

Angela wasn't thrilled about the prospect of spending time with the woman who was deliberately

taking up all of Fareeha's attention. "No I'm fine. You go eat okay?" Her stomach let out a loud growl.

Fareeha smirked. "Sounds like you could use a sandwich." She reached out and gently took hold of Angela's hand, softly pulling the doctor out of the med bay.

Angela was too embarrassed to keep up her stubborn charade. She allowed herself to be led towards the kitchen, happy that Fareeha didn't let go of her hand.

Fareeha suddenly stopped, looking around the kitchen for the whereabouts of Ana and Hana. "They're not here." She gave the place another once over before shrugging her shoulders. "Guess it's just you and me then."

Angela felt better. She watched Fareeha sift through the refrigerator, pulling out a container that had the sandwiches in it. Her stomach growled louder when Fareeha opened the lid, the smell of the food wafting through the air.

"I can heat yours up if you want." Fareeha reached up for a hanging pan and turned on the stove.

"Actually..." Angela skipped over to the container, taking out a cold sandwich. She leaned on the counter near the stove and started eating. "I'm too hungry to wait," she said between bites.

Fareeha placed two sandwiches in the hot pan. She smiled to herself, occasionally flipping the sandwiches with a spatula.

"Sandwiches make you that happy?" asked Angela.

Fareeha's smile widened. "In a way." She turned off the stove, putting the sandwiches on a plate.

Angela grabbed another cold sandwich and followed Fareeha to the table. "In a way?" She watched Fareeha take a bite into her warmed up meal, suddenly feeling jealous that the other woman got to have crisp bread and melted cheese.

"Hmhm." Fareeha took another bite. "I missed this. Just the two of us together."

Angela felt her heart thump in her chest. She didn't feel jealous anymore, the cold sandwich in her hands suddenly bursting with flavor. "Me too."

-

The doors to the shooting range hissed open, Hana looking back to check who it was. "Hey, there you are. Thought we lost you for a bit." She winked at the standing form of Fareeha in the doorway. "I didn't know when you'd find your way to the kitchen so we just came back here." She lowered the rifle and pointed to the other side of the shooting range. "I managed to hit three more coins while you were gone." A slow smile appeared on her lips. "How'd lunch go?"

Fareeha started making her way towards one of the benches. "Oh, Angela wanted to show me something when I passed by the med bay so I..." as she was sitting down the message Hana was trying to send her rang clear, "I ate lunch with her." She grinned at Hana. "It was nice."

Hana just smiled back, turning around to pick up the rifle again. "Alright grandma let's get it going again. Bet I'll hit five more."

Off to the side Ana had a small smirk, casually leaning against the table. "Let's make it six." She released another coin, looking back at her daughter once again engrossed in reports. Ana chuckled to herself, focusing back on the shooting range. *Are you going to wait forever?*

-

“Is this alright Hana?”

Hana stepped away from her giant cast iron skillet and went to observe Ana’s little station in the kitchen. Ana had perfectly sealed ten vegetable dumplings so far, each stacked neatly in a row. “Yeah, those look perfect.” She left Ana to continue her work, deciding to check on Fareeha’s progress as well.

Hana’s eye twitched at the sight. It was obvious Fareeha was struggling. Her dumplings were lumpy, some of the vegetables breaking through the seal of the wrapper. “Uh, Fareeha...”

Fareeha looked up from her work, her hands covered in sauce and bits of vegetables. “Something wrong?”

“I can see that you’re putting in some effort.” Hana cleared her throat. “But, your dumplings are...” She eyed the bamboo mat on the other counter. “I have something else that I want you to do.” She led Fareeha to the sink, waiting until her friend finished washing her hands. “Your new job is to wrap the kimbap.” They stopped in front of the bamboo mat, Hana pulling a big bowl of rice and a stack of seaweed wrappers from out of nowhere. “Just watch.” She grabbed a big knife and cut the pile of seaweed in half. Taking an individual slice, she spread some rice on it, using the bamboo mat to roll up the rice neatly. She took the knife again and divided the roll into four pieces, putting the pieces on a giant serving dish when she was done. “Easy right?”

“Yeah, I can do this.” Fareeha took a piece of seaweed and surprisingly repeated Hana’s instructions perfectly, putting the cut pieces on the serving dish. “Like this right?”

Hana nodded along appreciatively. “Perfect.” She left Fareeha to do her thing and back tracked to the abandoned dumpling station. “Hey Ana, you think you can finish these dumplings too?”

The older woman looked up from her station, three more neat rows of dumplings having appeared. “Of course. I’m almost done over here.”

Hana walked back to the skillet she left, focusing on finishing the spicy chicken stir fry she started.

-

Angela was sitting at the table next to Torbjörn. She had the biggest smile on her face. Hana had walked into the med bay earlier saying that she managed to convince those Amaris to cook dinner with her. She went off on some tangent talking about how it was going to be an extra special Korean dinner but Angela was focusing on the fact that for once in forever, Fareeha was going to be at dinner.

And so she happily waited, listening to Torbjörn recall some funny moments of his grandkids.

“And so she said, grandpa I thought the apple was real.” Torbjörn wiped at the tears gathering in his eye. “I still have that fake apple on display, the small little bite taken out of it for everyone to see. Every time she walks by it, she gives it this cute little glare.”

Angela laughed along, remembering a similar incident from when she was little. “I actually did that too. Except my apple was made out of wood. I was in school when it happened. The other children all laughed at me. I was spitting out chips of red paint all day.”

They both laughed at Angela’s dismay, stopping when McCree shouted out, “Finally!” from across the table.

“Thought I was gonna starve to death.” McCree winced when Reinhardt ‘lightly’ tapped him on the back.

“That’s the spirit!” Reinhardt’s laughter echoed throughout the hall. “Nothing like a good appetite to appreciate dinner.”

Ana placed her big dish of dumplings on the table, taking a seat next to Reinhardt. “I couldn’t say it better myself.”

Fareeha went to place her dish of kimbap next to the dumplings but Hana suddenly came barreling out of the kitchen with the big skillet in hand. “No not there.” She gestured with her chin to the end of the table Angela was sitting at. “Over there.” She winked.

Fareeha took the hint and placed her dish down at other end of the table, taking a seat next to the blonde when she was done.

“It’s been a long time since I’ve seen you.” Angela was resting her head on her hand, blue eyes focused on Fareeha.

Fareeha chuckled. “We ate lunch together earlier.”

“But I never see you at dinner anymore.” Angela exaggerated a sigh and pouted. “I kind of missed you.”

Fareeha furrowed her brows, considering Angela’s comments. “Well, I can start coming to dinner again.”

Angela lifted her head up. She had not expected Fareeha to decide so quickly. “But what about you and Ana?”

Fareeha averted her eyes, looking at her hands instead. “In the beginning, those walks were very...important. We needed the extra time.” She took a moment, twirling her thumbs to gather her thoughts. She let out a huff of breath and smiled back at Angela. “But now, we mainly just talk about anything really. I don’t mind taking walks with my mother but I can talk to her about moving them to after dinner. I’m sure she won’t mind.” Fareeha reached out and took a plate. “So how about we try the food? We made it special.”

Angela took a plate as well, getting up to serve herself some food. “I’m expecting perfection with how much Hana makes fun of my cooking.”

Fareeha chuckled behind Angela. “Trust me, she made sure everything went smoothly. She even kicked me off dumplings to make the kimbap.”

Angela took a piece of kimbap and quickly ate it. “It’s good.”

Fareeha rubbed the back of her head. “Well, you see, I just rolled them. Hana had already made the rice.”

Angela took another piece, slowly eating it as she looked onto Hana at the other side of the table. “For someone who always weasels her way out of cooking, she failed to mention that she’s pretty good at it.” She started filling her plate, walking over to the skillet to get some of the chicken stir fry.

“Maybe she’ll be more motivated to cook if I offer to help,” said Fareeha.

“Maybe.” Angela stood in front of the dumplings, Ana staring right at her. She froze, trying to

figure out what Ana was going to do. The older woman just smiled, taking a plate and putting some of the dumplings on it.

Angela made her way back to her seat when her plate was full. She glanced over to Ana and Fareeha talking at the end of the table, looking back to her plate when Fareeha made her way back.

“You okay?” Fareeha sat down. “You’re staring very intently at your plate.”

Angela shook out of it. “No everything’s fine.” She chuckled at the sight of Fareeha trying to stuff a whole dumpling in her mouth. She took a bite of the spicy stir fry, once again impressed with the flavor. “Just fine.”

During the middle of the meal, when everyone was on their second plate, Fareeha received a notification. She stopped eating and checked it, furrowing her brows the longer she looked at the holo-pad. After a bit of reading, Fareeha stood up, everyone going quiet at the serious expression on her face.

“We have a new assignment. I’ll send everyone the details in the morning. We leave in a week so take this time to get prepared.” She sat back down, filling her mouth with a second round of dumplings.

“I could get used to this,” said Angela.

Fareeha was still chewing. “Hmm?”

“A leader who’s all serious one minute and then two seconds later goes back to stuffing her face.” She reached out and brushed away a piece of stray rice from Fareeha’s face. “It’s nice.”

Fareeha felt her face heating up, eating more spicy stir fry to try and hide her blush.

-

Fareeha sat alone in the common room. Her eyes were glued to the projected screen. It was dark save for the light coming from the screen. She’d occasionally take a bite from her candy bar before forgetting about it all over again.

“Can’t sleep?” Angela was leaning over the back of the couch, an arm supporting her head as she tried to decipher what Fareeha was watching.

Fareeha didn’t take her eyes off the screen. “No, I saw that my favorite movie was on so…” She took another bite of chocolate instead of finishing.

“Fareeha, this is a documentary on rainforests.”

“A *very good* documentary on rainforests.” Fareeha finally looked at Angela. “Want to watch?”

Blue eyes couldn’t seem to look away from the screen the longer she watched. When the narrator started talking about tree frogs, Angela climbed over the couch and pulled an abandoned throw over her legs. “I might stay a bit,” she finally said. She reached over and snagged a portion of Fareeha’s chocolate bar.

The documentary was halfway done. “Remind me to check my bananas for spiders.” Angela reached for the chocolate bar again, finding nothing but Fareeha’s empty hand. “Huh?” She looked over, confirming there was no chocolate to be found. “Where’s the candy?”

“You ate it all.” Fareeha wiggled her fingers. “I’ve got empty hands.”

Angela was embarrassed. She puffed up her cheeks and crossed her arms in mock anger to try and hide the fact. “You...” Angela shifted the throw, leaning her head against Fareeha’s shoulder, scooting closer to the other woman. “Just stay still then if you want to make it up to me.”

“Make up for the fact that *you* ate the rest of *my* chocolate?”

“Yes.”

After the finishing credits rolled, Fareeha just sat on the couch a little while longer. Angela had fallen asleep on her shoulder, her arms wrapped around Fareeha’s own. She quickly pulled out another candy bar from between the couch cushions and silently opened the wrapper. Nibbling on a square, Fareeha closed her eyes and reveled in the sensation. She peaked an eye open and looked at Angela’s sleeping face. “Chocolate thief.”

Angela murmured something, one of her arms dropping to Fareeha’s lap. Fareeha smiled to herself, eating more of the chocolate, trying not to wake Angela in the process.

Fareeha started to slowly extract her arm from Angela’s grip when she ate half of the candy bar. Sometimes the doctor would tighten her hold, making Fareeha’s quest a little bit harder than necessary. When she was finally free, Fareeha carefully scooped up Angela in her arms, leaving the mystery throw behind. She walked slowly to Angela’s room, careful not to bump her head or feet on anything.

Once inside the doctor’s room, Fareeha pulled the covers down and laid the sleeping woman on the bed. Angela seemed to stir and started to sleepily mumble something. “...wait.” The blonde suddenly sat up and seemed to be full of energy. “You need to...” Angela tried to search for words in her sleep hazed brain.

Is she sleep talking? Fareeha played along. “What do I need to do?”

Angela furrowed her brows. “There was something...” She started speaking rapidly. “You needed to...to...” Angela seemed to be getting a bit upset.

Fareeha walked back to the bed, placing a comforting hand on Angela’s shoulder. “Hey it’s okay, just go back to sleep.” Angela nodded and went to lie down again. When Fareeha started to get back up, Angela grabbed her arm.

“A kiss.”

Fareeha sputtered. “What?” Her heart was pounding in her chest.

“A goodnight kiss.” Angela nodded to herself. “Mmhm.”

She’s just sleep talking. “Just get back to sleep. Okay?” Angela still wouldn’t let go.

“But you have to.” By this point, Angela’s eyes were fully closed. She had a dreamy smile on her face. “You always do,” she mumbled out.

Definitely dreaming. “So you’ll go to sleep if I kiss you goodnight?” asked Fareeha. Angela nodded. Fareeha brushed away blonde hair to behind Angela’s ear. She leaned down and placed a quick kiss on Angela’s temple. The blonde’s grip immediately loosened afterwards. “Goodnight Angela.”

Angela turned over to her other side. “...night.”

The next morning Angela woke up to the memory of being carried. She sat up and stretched out her arms. Wiping at her eyes, she spotted a piece of paper on her bedside table. Reaching out, she brought the paper closer and turned it around. Her heart fluttered at the sight of another Pharah and Mercy drawing. The two of them were flying in the dark of night, a big bright moon behind them. At the bottom, there was a single sentence that read, 'Come practice with me tonight?'

Angela smiled at the request. She reached into her drawer, pulling out a pen to draw out her response.

-

Pharah stood in full armor, the transport ship softly rocking in the air. Her gaze wasn't focused on anything in particular. As time went on, she started playing with her fingers. Her eyes flickered over to Ana, Reinhardt and Torbjörn playing cards on the table in the corner. The occasional laughter from their corner of the ship doing little to help alleviate the uneasy feeling she had. She switched her gaze to McCree and D.va sitting next to each other. McCree had his hat over his eyes, snoozing away like normal. D.va was focused on the retro handheld in her hands, her legs swung over the side to take up another seat as she casually played her game.

"Something wrong?" Mercy had gotten up from her seat, standing in front of Pharah with concern in her eyes.

When did she get here? Pharah sighed. *I can't be going in there unfocused.* She straightened up a little. "I just feel a little uneasy about this one."

"Uneasy?"

"Yeah, I feel like there's something we're not seeing." Pharah wiped at some spot on her armor. "But it might just be nerves. This is my first mission with my mother."

Angela seemed to be pondering Pharah's words. "I wouldn't just brush it off as nerves. If something's bothering you, there's probably good reason for it." Her smile radiated warmth. "And don't forget, we'll be there for you."

She felt a little lighter, the uneasiness still gnawing at the back of her thoughts. Pharah nodded at Mercy's words. "I'll keep the skies clear for everyone watching out for me."

-

Mercy came to. She couldn't move. The rubble from the collapsed building above kept her trapped. The field medic took jagged breaths, she couldn't see past the smoke.

"They've got snipers."

Mercy heard Pharah's voice over the communication channel. She was tending to the teenaged boy who got his leg stuck under some rubble from the increasingly unstable building they were in. The ceiling started to crumble, debris falling all around them. Mercy eyed the building across from them, the closest form of safety nearby. "Alright, your leg should be good to walk on. We're going to try to make it to the building across from us. It's too dangerous to stay here." The boy nodded, both of them getting up to leave.

They hurried along, the ceiling falling to pieces behind them as they ran for the door. The boy made it out just as the rest of the building fully collapsed, Mercy stuck below some of the rubble.

"You're stuck." The boy frantically paced around, his hands wringing through his hair. "I-I can't

just leave you.” He tried pulling at the medic, her body barely moving.

“Just go.” Mercy tried to push the blackness away. “My team will find me.”

The teenager stopped his pacing, looking back towards the other building and nodding. He took off in a run, leaving Mercy trapped beneath the concrete.

“Mercy come in, your vital signs just spiked.” Mercy smiled at Pharah’s voice. “I’m on my way to your position.”

The smoke cleared. Pharah was lying on her back in the distance, her movements having stilled. No, if I can just get to her. Mercy tried to crawl her way out, failing miserably. The tears started falling down her cheeks. I need to.

“I’ve got eyes on Mercy. She’s trapped.” Pharah started her descent down. “D.va, we could use some back up over here.”

“We’re a little preoccupied at the moment.” The sound of Reinhardt’s battle cry reverberated through D.va’s reply.

“Get here when you ca-“ A shooting pain shot through her old injury. Pharah looked down to see blood running down her chestplate.

From her place on the ground, Mercy saw it all. Pharah jerked in the air, two more shots hitting her abdomen before she fell to the ground. She watched helplessly as Pharah desperately tugged at her chest plate, fingers trying to pry it off her body. Explosions lit up the area, smoke covering the air, blocking her view of Pharah. For a moment the ringing in her ears was too much, everything going black.

From the distance, Mercy could see the figure of D.va’s MEKA soaring through the air. Someone was holding onto it from the side. It landed a little ways from where Pharah lied, the clear vision of Ana jumping to the ground to rush to her daughter’s side. D.va boosted her MEKA in Mercy’s direction, the doctor looking past the pink mech to see Ana pulling out a dart and injecting it into Pharah’s neck. Mercy’s heart pounded at the sight of Pharah’s fingers twitching.

The rubble started to be cleared away. D.va got out of the mech when most of the concrete was pulled out. “Hey doc, if you’re still alive say something.”

Angela reached out her arm, her fingers grasping for the image of Pharah being dragged behind cover by Ana. “Pharah.” She coughed.

D.va looked behind her, quickly focusing back on her task. “We’re gonna focus on you now okay?” Her voice didn’t waver. She reached down and cleared away the last of the rubble that had Angela’s legs trapped. Standing back up she searched frantically for Mercy’s staff. She found it glinting a meter away under some broken up concrete. D.va ran for the staff, falling to her knees and digging away desperately in the rubble.

“Okay so tell me how to work this thing.” D.va wasted no time getting back to Mercy with the staff in her grip. A weak hand reached up, touching one of the buttons on the staff. The young soldier hurriedly pressed the button, aiming the yellow glow towards Mercy.

Mercy started getting up when her strength started to return. “I have to...” She reached out and grabbed her staff, fulling standing up with it supporting her weight. “Take me to her.” D.va didn’t protest, hurrying to Mercy’s side to support the woman. They ran as fast as Mercy’s injuries would allow.

Ana held Pharah as close as she could. She had taken off the Raptora helmet, a gloved hand ran through her daughter's hair, the other stroking her cheek. Her head was bowed as she silently wept, the tears landing on Pharah's cheek.

Ana looked up when Mercy was suddenly by her daughter's side. "She's..." She couldn't say anymore before the tears started up again.

Angela checked for a pulse, her hand slightly shaking when there was none. She placed her hand over Pharah's chest plate, activating the staff at the same time. "I've got you." She stared into lifeless brown eyes as the glowing stream shined brighter. "I've got you."

Pharah blinked and Mercy allowed the tears to fall in full force. The Raptora pilot started coughing, her breath coming in jagged spurts. The firing in the distance suddenly stopped. "Got 'im." McCree's voice over the comms. didn't register, Mercy having buried her face in Pharah's neck. "I've got you."

-

They were at the hospital. Hana flew the transport ship back to base, leaving just Ana and Angela in their civilian clothes to wait at the hospital. Fareeha had been in surgery for the last four hours.

"You can see her now."

Ana and Angela shot up from their seats, closely following the doctor to Fareeha's room. When they got to the room, the doctor opened the door first, turning to the two women behind him. "She'll be asleep for a while." He left them there when they nodded in return.

They didn't say anything. Ana pulled up a chair, looking at her daughter sleep from where she sat. She eventually reached out a hand, loosely holding Fareeha's open palm. Angela opted to stay standing. She'd occasionally pace around in between focusing on Fareeha.

"Why don't you sit down?" Ana broke the silence.

Angela stopped pacing. She took a moment to observe Fareeha's sleeping face. "I..." She eyed the bathroom connected to the room. "I'll be back."

Angela rushed to the open bathroom door, closing it behind her. She dragged her feet to the wall opposite her, resting a palm on the cool tile. Tears clouded her vision and she started to slide down to the floor, her back to the wall. Angela had her head resting between her knees, trying to keep the sounds of her sobbing quiet.

She reached into her shirt and pulled on the chain around her neck, revealing a golden ring that hung from it. Angela traced the engraving gently with her fingertips, kissing the ring quickly before squeezing it in her hands. She didn't look up when the sound of the bathroom door opening filled the room.

"She was gone." Angela's sobs grew louder. A comforting touch rested on her knee, Angela felt Ana get on her knees before her.

"I know." Ana leaned forward and enveloped Angela in her arms.

Angela let go of the ring, surging forward to wrap her arms around the other woman. The sobs wracked her body. "I love her."

"I know." Ana wrapped her arms tighter around Angela, her tears falling onto blonde hair. "I know."

-

Fareeha was dressed up in her best. She made sure to comb her hair thoroughly, ridding her dark locks of any knots. She had on a dark blue dress, golden bracelets adorning her wrists. The flats she wore were black and shiny, the golden beads in her hair glinting in the light as well.

Tomorrow Angela would leave for Switzerland to go back to the university Fareeha couldn't remember the name of. Small hands tightened over the gift she held. In all honesty, Fareeha finished making the gift two weeks ago but she got nervous every time she approached the busy intern.

"Tonight's her last night here so just give it to her." She started hopping from one foot to the other to hype herself up.

Ana stood at the end of the hallway that led to the med bay. For the past ten minutes, she watched her daughter fidget in front of the med bay doors. She smiled when Fareeha started hopping around. 'Just go in.' A minute later, Ana straightened up in surprise. Fareeha just waltzed right in looking confident, like she didn't just spend a good chunk of time nervously standing in front of the door. Ana silently moved closer, this was something she didn't want to miss.

"Oh Fareeha! You look so nice." Angela was sitting in her computer chair, looking over to the younger girl that just walked in. "Is there a party going on?" She tugged on her old t-shirt. "I'm afraid I'm a bit under dressed for one."

Fareeha stopped at the edge of the desk, putting her hands at her sides to keep from fidgeting. "No, there isn't a party." She took a deep breath and continued. "I just wanted to give you something I made since you're leaving tomorrow."

Angela's eyebrows perked up. From the corner of her eye, she saw Ana standing in the doorway. The older woman mouthed a quick, 'Don't look at me,' before Angela focused her gaze back on Fareeha. "And you dressed up for that? How sweet of you." She swiveled in her chair to completely face Fareeha. "What did you want to give me?"

Fareeha held out her clenched hand, opening her palm to reveal a gold ring. It shined in the light and was impossibly smoothed. Angela took the offered ring and rotated it in her hand. 'She made this?' The engraved Arabic lettering was perfectly carved and she didn't see any signs of scuffing or jagged mistakes. She looked back to Fareeha when the girl started speaking again.

"It's a wedding ring. For when we get married in the future." Bright brown eyes beamed up at Angela with innocence and happiness.

Angela was at a loss for words. The teenager was thrown for a loop by Fareeha's blunt intentions. "Fareeha I..." Her eyes flickered to the doorway, Ana standing there with her arms crossed, a pointed look aimed at the young intern. Angela slid the ring on her finger to test the fit. 'It's actually perfect.' She could feel Ana's smug gaze on her. She resisted looking back though, afraid her constant change of sight would alert Fareeha to her mother's presence. Mulling over her next words Angela finally spoke again. "This is so thoughtful of you. I have to say that I didn't know you felt this way." Fareeha's expression turned shy. "But the thing about the future is you never know what's going to happen." She twirled the ring around her finger. "So who knows, maybe one day we will get married." Angela smiled when the girl's mood picked up.

From the doorway, Ana gave Angela a thumbs up. She motioned for the blonde to continue so she could escape unnoticed. Ana started making her way back to her room, already anticipating Fareeha's excited arrival.

Angela stood up from the computer chair and enveloped Fareeha in a hug. “Thank you so much for your gift. I’ll be sure to keep it with me.”

Fareeha had the biggest smile on her face. She pulled away from the hug and started hopping on her feet again. “I have to go now.” She looked like she could barely contain her excitement. “Have a safe trip tomorrow!” Not wasting any time, Fareeha ran off, heading straight for her room. She was eager to tell her mother what happened.

Chapter End Notes

Funny thing is I was working on BAC before this but I finished this one first? I was hoping for a February update on BAC but I suddenly had to write that thing about that waterfall.

The next chapter wraps things up. Chapter seven will be an epilogue of sorts. Obviously something cute.

Chapter Summary

Things, things, and more things.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Angela had received a call on her holopad, delighted to see Fareeha's face pop up. "Fareeha! It's been a while. I'm so glad you called, I was just wondering when was the last time I heard from you."

"So I take it I'm not interrupting anything?" The twenty-four-year-old soldier was sitting in her tent in the middle of the desert. Her white tank top showed off the muscle she had gained over the years, sweat beading on her skin from the heat.

Angela waved a hand in front of the camera. "You caught me on my day off. Which reminds me, when do you get leave? I'm looking forward to your next visit."

Fareeha grimaced. "Well, currently I've been deployed to the godforsaken desert. Things have been a bit...tense." She tapped her chin in contemplation. "Pretty sure I'll be here for another six months." From her side of the display, Fareeha could clearly see Angela's pout.

"But your birthday is in two months." Pale fingers rearranged the chain around her neck. Fareeha didn't notice she was wearing one since it was hidden underneath her shirt. She paid it no mind. "And you're going to spend it out there?"

"It's not so bad. I'm sure my squad will think of something creative. They always do."

"So six months?" Angela seemed to think about something. "Maybe I can go visit over there? Pull some strings with Overwatch?"

Fareeha felt her face heat up. "You'd do that?"

"Of course! I love spending time with you. I can even help your squad mates with whatever they're planning for your birthday."

Fareeha rubbed the back of her head. "It really is enough that you'll be there. And maybe..." Fareeha clamped her mouth shut when she realized that she was starting to voice her thoughts.

Angela had her head cocked to the side waiting for Fareeha to continue. "And maybe what?"

Fareeha quickly tried to wave it off. "It's nothing, don't worry about it." She turned to look out the flaps of her tent when she heard her name being called. "Sorry, it looks like I have to go."

Angela had her lips pursed, not really convinced that it was nothing. "Call me again soon okay? I'll need to know the details so I can arrange my visit." She blew a kiss to the younger woman and waved goodbye. "I'm glad you called. Goodbye Fareeha."

Fareeha waved back. "Goodbye Angela." She watched the screen go blank and waited a few

minutes before releasing her held breath. She stood up from where she was sitting and headed outside.

As she walked out of the tent, she whispered the rest of her thought to herself. "And maybe I can tell you that I'm in love with you." Her hand covered her eyes as the sun shone impossibly bright. She spotted her squad mates waiting in the jeep in the distance.

-

Angela walked into Fareeha's hospital room. Hana was already there sitting in a chair with a game pad in her hand. She was staring at the screen intently, her mouth pressed in concentration. Fareeha was doing much the same in the hospital bed she sat in.

"Hana, can I please win just one game?" Fareeha had bowed her head and sighed in defeat.

"Please. And make you think you're actually good at this game? In your dreams."

"You know Fareeha, she wouldn't even let you win when her arm was broken," said Angela. She fully walked into the room and took a seat at Fareeha's side. Her eyes softened at the look of surprise on Fareeha's face. She let her restless hand stray, settling for occupying it with gentle touches to Fareeha's arm.

In the week of Fareeha's recovery, the Raptora pilot had been transferred to a hospital in Gibraltar. She noticed Angela started making more affectionate gestures. She'd look at Fareeha with charming eyes and always had a smile when she visited. She would never sit down on one of the chairs, opting to sit next to her on the hospital bed. Fareeha noticed that Angela took to giving her soft touches. Whether or not it was intentional, the effect she had on Fareeha was very much real. Fareeha could feel the ghost of gentle fingertips on her cheeks, behind her ears, and along her arms if she closed her eyes and concentrated enough. She was always close, always whispering for her to just get better. It felt like her heart was about to burst from all the attention.

Fareeha's heart started pounding again, grateful that she wasn't hooked up to the monitors anymore. "I thought you weren't going to be able to make it? Something about a deadline?"

"Hmm, well," Angela tucked a strand of dark hair behind Fareeha's ear, lingering slightly before pulling away, "I work fast." She leaned her head on Fareeha's good shoulder. "Besides, I didn't want to miss taking you back home. Have they cleared you yet?"

"Ah," Fareeha looked over to Hana, she seemed to have trouble remembering exactly what her doctor said earlier. Angela wasn't distracting her. Nope. "Do you remember what the doctor said Hana?"

Hana didn't bother looking up from the screen. She took a moment to blow a bubble with the gum she was chewing. "He said he'd be back in an hour." She blew another bubble. "That was an hour ago."

"So I get to leave soon," said Fareeha.

"That's if they don't find anything," said Angela, her eyes now closed.

"But I can leave if I want to. They can't keep me here." Fareeha's frowned at the prospect of staying at the hospital any longer.

"But would you stay if I asked you to? I don't want anything to happen to you."

Fareeha stared wide eyed at the look Angela gave her. Blue eyes started to water with unspilled

tears, Angela's gaze held nothing but concern and a slight twinge of fear. She couldn't refuse. "Yeah, of course. I'll stay if they find anything." She reached out to wipe away the tear that fell down Angela's cheek when she closed her eyes again.

"Sorry." Angela took a deep breath to try to even out her breathing. "I'm a mess. I don't know what came over me. You're the one who..." *Died*. Her breath hiccupped. "Who's in the hospital."

Hana closed her game pad and stood up. "I'm gonna go look for some snacks." She didn't bother waiting for a response. Anyone with sense could tell they needed space.

Fareeha wrapped her good arm around Angela's waist. "Talk to me."

It was silent for a while. Angela wrapped her hand around Fareeha's wrist, feeling the steady pulse beneath the skin. "I saw what happened."

"On the mission." Angela nodded into her shoulder.

"You were right there in the air. It looked like nothing could touch you. And you were on your way to *me*. I couldn't get to you. I watched you fall and I couldn't get to you. You were *desperately* clutching at your chest plate, trying to pry it off. And then you were still."

Fareeha felt Angela start to shake. She held her closer.

"For a moment, I thought that you would be fine. Because Ana got to you. Because I *saw* your fingers twitch. Angela started sobbing into Fareeha's shirt. "You weren't breathing, you didn't have a pulse, and you were gone. You were *gone*." Angela started sniffing, wiping away the tears in an attempt to calm down. "So please, just get better. That can't happen again."

Fareeha was running her hand along Angela's arm. Her palm worked in a non-stop fluid motion. "I think I saw something. There was something beyond the darkness when I...you know."

Angela seemed curious. She wiped away the remaining tears and sniffled once more. "What did you see?"

Fareeha smiled. "I saw you."

Angela couldn't help but smile back. "That must have been when I brought you back."

"Was it?" Fareeha smirked. "I guess I could say you were my guardian angel."

Angela repositioned herself on the bed. "But it was dark?"

"Yeah, nothing but blackness."

"And did you feel any pain?"

"No pain. It was sort of peaceful in a way." She quickly back peddled when Angela clutched at her shirt. "Not that I want to experience it again anytime soon."

Angela let go of the shirt. "I just want you home safe."

"There's nothing I would want more."

A knock on the door brought them out of their bubble. Angela quickly sat up when she saw the doctor standing in the doorway.

"Good news Miss Amari, your scans and bloodwork came back clear. You can sign the discharge

form whenever you feel ready. Although, I still recommend treatment for your shoulder.

Fareeha sat up in the bed. She moved her shoulder a bit and winced at the pain but otherwise she felt fine. "I'll just sign the form. Dr. Ziegler has said that she would take care of my shoulder."

The man seemed to sputter. He did a double take on Angela and immediately stiffened up around the other doctor. "I'm sorry I didn't recognize you Dr. Ziegler."

Angela tugged on her worn t-shirt, gesturing to the rest of her outfit with her other hand. "I suppose that's the whole purpose of me dressing down. I'm here for Fareeha, nothing more."

"Oh yes, of course." Fareeha's doctor, quickly made his way back to the door, pulling out the hoverchair from the hallway. "If Miss Amari could take a seat when she's ready to leave, it's hospital policy. And if that's all, I'll leave you two be."

Fareeha watched the doctor leave from her place on the bed. She eyed the chair with a frown. "Do I really have to leave in that?"

"Hospital policy my dear."

"At least I didn't have to wear those hospital gowns anymore. Two days of that was enough."

"You don't seem like a big fan of hospitals."

Fareeha shrugged her shoulders. "I just like to be comfortable." She took the covers off her legs and swung them over the side. Tentatively, she tested the weight on her feet before fully committing to standing up all the way. Angela had made sure to make Fareeha promise that she would stay in bed, so her legs were a little weak and achy because of it. Putting her feet into the slippers on the floor, Fareeha shuffled her way to the chair.

"Look at you. You can barely walk anyway."

Fareeha sat in the hovering chair. "Someone put me on strict bed rest. Something like, 'I don't want you walking around unless you have to use the bathroom.' Even Hana made sure I didn't get out of bed."

Angela walked up to the handles and started pushing the chair out of the door. They made it to the nurse station where Fareeha was discharged. Hana was sitting nearby, three bags of chips already emptied out beside her. She seemed to perk up when she saw them.

"Are we leaving now?"

"Yeah, and hopefully I won't have to come back," said Fareeha.

-

"Okay, last test. Raise your arm up like this." Angela had her right arm stretched up into the air, it was pointed straight up. She watched Fareeha do the same. Blue eyes tried to scan for any signs of discomfort but all she could focus on was that dorky smile on Fareeha's face. "What?" She tried to bite back the upwards curl of her lips.

"You still have your arm up Angela."

Angela looked up at her still raised arm. She just laughed. "I still do huh?" Angela walked forward and interlaced their raised hands. She worked them through a range of movement that may or may not have been just for fun. It was worth it. "Well Fareeha, I think it's safe to say that

your shoulder is back to tip top shape again.” She hadn’t let go of Fareeha’s hand yet.

“Is that the official prognosis? Seems to me like you were just messing around.” Fareeha started moving them around. “But I think this seems like more fun, plus, you know, testing out my range of motion.” Her right arm found its way behind Angela’s shoulder, Fareeha surprising the doctor by starting them in a made up dance.

Angela was smiling with her teeth, quickly finding her pace and going along with the flow. “You didn’t tell me you could dance like this.”

“Hmm. I had to learn for formal events. HSI paid for all my classes.” She spun the doctor a few times before bring her back in. “I didn’t think I liked dancing until I actually had to. Turns out I’m a natural. I like to think of my dancing skills as an underused talent. I don’t get to do it very often.”

“Then by all means, let’s put your talent to use.” Angela had picked up the speed, pleasantly surprised when Fareeha would lift or dip her at just the right moments. It was exhilarating. Her stomach was doing summersaults and her skin tingled everywhere Fareeha touched her. She felt that they could go on like that forever.

They had slowed down after a while, the two of them just dancing in a circle. Angela wanted so badly just to hold Fareeha close. To not let go and just say everything that weighed on her heart. *And why don’t I?* She looked up into those mesmerizing brown eyes. *Is it that far-fetched to think she might have feelings for me as well?* She slid a hand up to Fareeha’s cheek, caressing the soft skin with her thumb. *I’ll never know unless I say something.* “Fareeha?”

“Yes?”

“I–“

The doors to the med bay opened, Fareeha and Angela stopped their dance to see who it was.

Ana was standing at the doorway looking wide-eyed. “Am I interrupting? I can come back later.”

Fareeha slowly let go of Angela. Angela got a little upset over the ruined moment. She would have been more upset if Ana wasn’t giving her an apologetic look.

“It’s okay. I lost track of time and nearly forgot that I said I’d help with dinner.” Fareeha looked to Angela. “Did you want to say something?”

Angela shook her head. “It can wait.”

“So if that’s the case, maybe we can pick up where we left off later? Maybe add some music too?”

Angela could help but smile. “I’d like that.” She watched the two of them leave the med bay, immediately finding a chair to alleviate the shaking in her legs. *I don’t think I’ve ever been this nervous before.*

-

“How is your shoulder Fareeha?” asked Ana. They had walked into the kitchen where everything was already set up. Ana directed Fareeha to one of the cutting boards.

Fareeha picked up the knife that was sitting atop the cutting board. She eyed the onions waiting there and tried to prepare herself for the tears. Ana’s cutting board had tame things to cut. There were things like bell peppers and tomatoes, all the onions left for Fareeha to cut. This was very deliberate. Fareeha sighed and reached for an onion. “It feels brand new.” Her eyes watered

slightly after the first cut.

“You two looked like you were dancing at a wedding.” Ana’s pile of cut vegetables grew.

Fareeha smiled through the first tear that fell. The onions were getting to her. “You think so?”

The vegetables were tossed in a bowl. Ana sprinkled a seasoning mixture and mixing the vegetables inside. “It reminded me of that comic you drew.”

The knife clattered to the cutting board. Fareeha drew up her sliced finger to her mouth. The pain from the cut was shadowed by the shock to her system. She turned around and looked at her mother with wide eyes. “You still remember that?” The sink wasn’t too far away. She quickly rinsed her finger and pulled out a bandage from her pocket, wrapping her finger with red smiley faces.

“Remember it?” Ana chuckled. “I still have it.” She reached into one of her many pockets and pulled out a folded piece of paper. It looked faded and worn. “See?”

Fareeha felt like her eyes were going to pop out of her head, her heartbeat quickened when her mother started unfolding the paper. From behind, she could still see the designs for the ring. “You kept that? Even after what happened...”

“I always had it with me.” Ana straightened out the paper and cleared her throat. “The writing is a little faded but I can still read it.”

Fareeha felt her cheeks heating up. She quickly turned around and walked back to her cutting board. Fareeha pulled out a new knife. The rest of the onions weren’t going to cut themselves.

“Step one: Ask mama for help.” The first panel had a younger Fareeha pictured next to her mother with a bunch of question marks surrounding them.

Fareeha picked up the speed of her cutting.

“Step two: make the perfect ring.” The second panel had Fareeha and Ana sitting at a bench dual wielding welding guns. The welding masks they wore were illuminated by the flames.

Peeling another onion felt like eternity. There really were a lot of onions. Did there need to be?

“Step three: dress up in my best to impress Angela.” In the third panel Fareeha had a dress on. Her hair shone in the light and there was a glow that illuminated the outline of her body.

Fareeha took a deep breath to calm down. She put the knife down and just stared at the cutting board. It felt like she was reliving each moment. She just listened.

“Step four: give Angela the ring.” Fareeha was pictured in the fourth panel with her hand extended to Angela, the ring shining in her palm. Angela had a big smile and the rest of the panel was filled in with hearts and roses.

Fareeha had her hands clutched on the counter, a small smile on her face.

“And finally step five: get married when we’re older.” A taller Fareeha was holding Angela as they danced together. A big wedding cake was in the background. Standing by it and stealing a slice was Ana.

There was still one more onion left to cut. Fareeha wiped away the tears gathered in her eyes and continued her cutting. All that onion mist must have made her teary eyed.

Ana folded the comic again, putting it in her pocket before walking over to one of the pots on the stove. "You know Fareeha, she still has the ring."

Her knife clattered again, Fareeha holding a different finger to her mouth. She couldn't believe it. Her ears were throbbing with the sound of her heart pumping away. She slowly retraced her steps back to the sink, repeating the process of rinsing her other finger and sticking a bandage on it. "You saw it?" Her words were barely above a whisper.

"It's on the necklace she wears."

Fareeha dug through her memory, all the moments she spent with Angela over the past months passing through her mind's eye. She couldn't recall seeing Angela wear one. "I don't remember her wearing one."

"Just ask her."

She was nervous all of a sudden.

Ana's eye softened at the sight of her daughter. She'd have to try a bit harder. Stirring the pot in front of her Ana spoke again. "Can you hand me the onions?" She took a pan down and poured the vegetables in.

Fareeha picked up the bowl of chopped onions and walked over to her mother. Ana took the bowl and poured some of the onions in with the vegetables. She quickly put the bowl down and took hold of Fareeha's wrist when she saw her walking away. "Fareeha." She continued when her daughter stood perfectly still. "I want you to be happy. Just tell her how you feel."

"I..."

"You love her."

Fareeha took a deep breath, swallowing her nervous feelings. "I love her."

Ana grinned. "See? That wasn't so hard. You just have to tell Angela that." She pointed over to the bag of rice on the counter. "Now go make the rice. You're not getting out of helping me."

-

Fareeha felt someone shaking her. Her name was softly being called. She blinked a few times, turning her head to see Angela smiling at her.

"Sorry to wake you, but I can't pick you up and you didn't have a blanket." Angela pursed her lips when she took a moment to think. "But now that I think about it, I could have just brought you a blanket."

Fareeha yawned, stretching out her aching limbs. "No, no it's fine. I probably would have woken up with a sore neck." She sat up on the couch and patted the cushion next to her. "Sit with me?"

Angela didn't hesitate to take the spot next to Fareeha. They sat in silence for a while, the both of them anxiously waiting to build up the courage to speak first.

"Fareeha I-"

"Angela-"

They laughed. "You go first," said Angela.

Fareeha cleared her throat before speaking. "Mother told me something about you."

Angela's heart was hammering in her chest. *Did she...?* Her nerves shot through the roof. "What did she tell you?"

"She told me that you still have the ring I gave you." Fareeha looked straight into blue eyes. "Is that true?"

Angela clutched at her chest, feeling the ring beneath the material of her shirt. She wasn't expecting that. "I do." She reached into her shirt and pulled out the necklace. Her hand instinctively enveloped the ring, tracing the metal between her fingers. "I've had it with me since you gave it to me."

Fareeha reached out to Angela's hand, touching the ring she hadn't seen in a very long time. "I thought that you might have just chucked it in a drawer somewhere. I was just a kid when I gave it to you."

"But here's the thing," Angela's felt her lips curve up, "This ring has seen me through it all. It was an innocent gesture and I sometimes I needed a reminder that the world still has the same innocence in it. That there's people still fighting for that."

Fareeha brought her hand down. She was stunned by the passion burning in Angela's eyes.

"And after all these years, I still can't get over what you wrote. *In this life*," Angela's finger traced over the outside engraving, "*we find our strength*." Her thumb circled the inside engraving. "When I went back to the university, I had it translated right away. I would have asked you but you suddenly had to go."

The blush on Fareeha's cheeks started traveling down her neck. "That was something my grandmother once told me. She was talking about my mother when she said it. It sort of made an impression on me since it's a metaphor for love. Because, you know." Fareeha felt like she was on fire. "You're supposed to be in love when you get married."

"So you were a young romantic." Angela took Fareeha's dropped hand, running her thumb along it.

Fareeha got quiet. She was looking at their intertwined hands. "I still am." The thoughts in her mind went still. It felt calm, her heart slowly thumping in her chest. Fareeha looked up at Angela with a certain kind of clarity. Her eyes were filled with determination. She held Angela's gaze like there was nothing else in the world.

Angela couldn't look away. She could only watch as Fareeha brought their hands closer.

"Angela." Fareeha closed her eyes, opening them back up with a flaming passion reflected in her brown orbs. "I love you." She studied Angela's face, watching her eyes widen with shock before softening again. She was suddenly on her back, Angela's hands gripping both of her shoulders, her blue eyes shining and her mouth slightly parted.

"You..." Angela bowed her head. The blonde strands blocked her face. She lifted one of her hands again, gently pushing against Fareeha's shoulder. "You love me."

"I do." Fareeha felt the words echo through her mind, unafraid to say them again. "I love you."

"And I was trying..." Angela felt her body start to shake with restless energy. "I was trying to tell you the same." She dropped down to Fareeha's side, sliding a hand up to her cheek. "I love you."

Fareeha put an arm over her eyes, a smile taking up her features as she pulled Angela closer to her. "Am I dreaming?"

Angela's eyes crinkled as she laughed at Fareeha's reaction. "No, you're awake." Her hand left Fareeha's cheek, resting on the arm that covered the other woman's eye. She gently started moving it away, rising on her elbow when she could see Fareeha's beautiful eyes again. "That's better." She felt Fareeha move her hand from her waist to behind her neck, her skin tingling at the contact. Fareeha got up on her elbow, suddenly closing the gap between them. Angela couldn't focus on anything but the intensity in Fareeha's eyes and the feeling of her fingers running through the fine hairs along her neck.

Fareeha was on her back again, closing her eyes at the feeling of Angela's lips on hers. Her fingers twitched from the spark of electricity she felt from the contact with Angela's skin. Her heart felt like it running at its own time, slowing down and speeding back up, thumping hard and pausing for a fraction of a second before picking back up again. The warmth of Angela's lips moving against hers made her thoughts slow down, their softness ingrained in her memory.

"Fareeha." Angela pulled away for a second before dipping her head to capture Fareeha's lips once more. She managed to pull away again, resting her forehead on Fareeha's shoulder. Angela couldn't hold back her smile. "I've been wanting to do that for a while now."

"And how long is a while?"

"Since we were in London."

Fareeha chuckled, shaking her head. "All this time, and I didn't pick up on it sooner."

"You were being sweet and thoughtful. There's nothing wrong with that."

"Hmm."

Angela wrapped an arm around Fareeha's shoulder. She closed her eyes and tried to concentrate on the rhythmic beating of Fareeha's heart. "I mean it. It's part of what I love about you." The exhaustion she felt before coming to wake up Fareeha was coming back. The rush of excitement passing as she got more comfortable.

"Are you falling asleep?"

It took a moment for Angela to respond. She shifted so that their legs were tangled together. "...no."

Fareeha felt her fatigue creeping up as well. The warmth and pleasant pressure from Angela lying on top of her was comforting, her eyelids drooping as time went on. Angela's even breathing confirmed that the blonde had fallen asleep, Fareeha following soon after.

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There was a loud thud. The sound echoed off the walls, waking Fareeha up. She wiped at her eye and yawned, quickly blinking awake when she noticed her surroundings. Angela was still sleeping on top of her, favoring Fareeha's left side. There was a blanket draped over the two of them, the cotton texture feeling familiar. Fareeha turned her head to find the source of the noise. She locked eyes with Hana standing some distance away from the couch. Her game pad was on the floor and she was looking at Fareeha with shock and surprise.

Hana started waving her hands in all different directions, settling on pointing furiously at the sleeping doctor. There was an expectant look on her face.

Fareeha nodded, trying to contain a laugh when Hana launched a fist into the air. She watched Hana do a spin before stopping and calming herself down. The young soldier whispered some congratulatory words before picking up her game pad and skedaddling out of there. Her attention was brought back to Angela when the doctor started moving. Fareeha felt her stretch out her arms before catching sight of lidded blue eyes.

“Good morning,” said Fareeha.

Angela wrapped her arms around Fareeha’s neck and scooted up a little further. “Not yet.” She yawned before closing her eyes again. “Later.”

Fareeha readjusted the blanket, craning her head to look out the window. It was still a little dark out. She got comfortable again. “Okay later.”

Chapter End Notes

Well, this sort of wraps it up. There will be a little epilogue. I'm leaning more towards something at the beach. Either way, it will address some things and just be cute.

I was also asked if I had any social media so I made a Tumblr with the same name. Send a holler at thesoundofthunderstorms.tumblr.com if you want.

Epilogue

Chapter Summary

Just some fun on the beach.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The sun was bright, only small wisps of clouds left clinging to the sky. The soft sea breeze helped to alleviate the heat on the beach. Angela sat under the beach canopy they had set up, a thick blanket separating them from the sand. She was situated near the edge of the blanket, burying her toes in the hot sand as her sunglasses covered eyes tracked Fareeha in the water. Ana sat off to her side, lounging in a beach chair and reading something on her tablet.

Hana was sitting in the sand, sunglasses perched on her nose and globs of sunscreen marking her face. She had her damp hair tied up in a bun, a sun hat covering her head. She had set up the small grill, reaching into the cooler they brought to pull out two containers. One was filled to the brim with marinated meat, the other held an assortment of thick cut seasoned vegetables. Hana focused her gaze to the water while she waited for the coals to heat up.

From the water, Fareeha had turned around, eyes squinted in the direction of the canopy. She smiled when she saw Angela waving at her, waving back from where she stood. She felt the waves lapping against her back, paying them no attention, too focused on Angela to care. But then she was suddenly twisting around under the water. A massive undetected wave knocked her over into the salty water. The water stung her eyes and when she emerged to the surface, her hair stuck to every spot on her face. Pushing the unruly hair back from her face, Fareeha was knocked back into the waves, her face first to break the water's surface.

The cool water could do nothing for the heat traveling up Fareeha's face. Laughter echoed over the waves, the forms of Angela and Hana rolling around in laughter could be seen clear across the sand. Ana had her face buried in her tablet, Fareeha suspected it was to hide the smirk she undoubtedly had. The walk back to shore was filled with stumbling feet. It felt like the ocean was pitted against her, taking every opportunity to try and trip Fareeha.

Angela watched as Fareeha nearly got to the edge of the water before getting tripped again one last time. The tangled mess of hair covering Fareeha's face and the outstretched arms used for balance was an endearing sight. She eventually stopped laughing, a smile still on her face as she watched Fareeha plop down on the wet sand with her back to the canopy. Angela just sat there, content to watch Fareeha detangle her hair from where she sat.

"Oh man, that was hilarious." Hana wiped the sand from her arms.

Angela had her elbows on her knees, supporting her head with both hands. "Mmhm." A dopey smile.

Looking between the pouting soldier still sitting on the wet sand and the infatuated doctor too enamored to pay attention to anything else, Hana couldn't help but smile. A happy tune escaped her lips as she checked the coals again. Her eyebrows perked up, picking up the container of meat and picking up a pair of tongs. Each piece of meat was carefully placed, hawk-like eyes watching

the cooking process as soon as each piece touch the hot grill. "Meat's cooking."

Angela gave a small noise of acknowledgement to Hana's announcement. She still had the very important task of watching her girlfriend pout in the sand. Very important.

"Something caught your eye Angela?" Ana still had her gaze focused on her tablet.

"Huh?" Caught off guard, Angela nearly fell backwards at Ana's sudden question. "Ah." Blue eyes darted between Ana and Fareeha. "Oh, um." She cleared her throat. "It's just that Fareeha gets like that sometimes when she's embarrassed. I think it's cute." Angela pointed to the pouting woman playing with the sand on the beach.

A laugh and the shake of her head. Ana went back to reading on her tablet.

Distracted from her very important task, Angela felt the gears turning in her head. She looked back to Ana. Then to Fareeha. Back again at Ana and it finally clicked. "Say Ana," Angela lowered her sunglasses to get a clear view of the older woman, "just what were you trying to do when you came back to the watchpoint?"

Ana didn't look up from her tablet. "You're going to have to be more specific Angela." A slight upturn of lips.

"You know." Angela started to get a little frustrated.

"I know a lot of things Angela."

"You were doing it on purpose." A pointed finger to emphasize her point.

A sighed escaped the older woman's lips. Ana put her tablet down and finally looked at Angela. "I knew how you felt about Fareeha. I could tell from the moment I stepped inside the watchpoint."

"I-I." Pink colored Angela's face. She could barely stutter out a response, choosing to close her mouth and try to calm down.

"I don't know if she told you this but Fareeha has been in love with you for a long time." A small smile when Angela nodded along. "And so I thought that if I could get you to tell Fareeha how you felt, it would be the best gift I could offer."

Angela's heart pounded. Memories of all the different times she could have taken the opportunity to tell Fareeha how she felt came rushing to the forefront of her mind. And then the heart stopping moment where it was *Fareeha* who took the first step.

"I was hoping that in taking up all of Fareeha's time, you would get upset enough to do something about it. That you would end up telling Fareeha how you felt." Another sigh. "But it didn't work. So I just left you two be." Dark brown eyes left Angela's, focusing on something in the distance. "I'm just glad things worked out in the end." She smiled at Fareeha's silent gesture to keep Angela distracted, the sneaky look on her daughter's face making her heart swell. "Wouldn't you say so Angela?"

Angela blinked at Ana's explanation. The blurry picture of Ana's actions finally started to clear up. There was no denying it. Every time Ana butted in between her time with Fareeha, Angela just wanted to drag her love to the nearest empty room, blurt out every declaration of love she could think of, and kiss her senseless. But she wasn't about to tell Ana that.

"Ana, I-" Cold droplets of water touched her skin. Angela let out the high-pitched screech. She

quickly whipped her head forward, watching as Fareeha slowly climbed over her legs. Angela instantly calmed down when she saw the cause of her distress. Fareeha was looking up at her with beautiful round eyes, a sweet smile on her face making her seem innocent. Angela sat up straighter and crossed her arms, a stern look on her face. She wasn't mad. She just wanted to give Fareeha a hard time for scaring her.

"Fareeha." It took a lot of effort from Angela to keep her voice straight. She reached out a hand and gently pushed Fareeha's shoulder back. "Don't act like you did nothing wrong." A small smirk at the corner of her lips.

Of course Fareeha saw it. She was always paying attention. "I did something wrong?" She slowly made her way up Angela's outstretched legs, water dripping on the exposed skin. "I don't recall doing anything bad." A gentle kiss to a folded elbow.

Fareeha's sweet smile was blinding. Angela playfully tried to shove Fareeha away as the other woman got closer. Fareeha would just widen her smile and continued her path, stopping when their faces were centimeters apart. It was so hard to keep up the act. She just wanted Fareeha close. And so the act crumbled, Angela finally giving in to pull Fareeha up the rest of the way for a kiss.

Her lips had the taste of salt. Angela didn't care. A laugh escaped her lips when Fareeha pushed them forward, putting the blonde on her back so Fareeha could tangle their legs together and pepper her face with kisses. The wet strands of hair tickled Angela's face, the blonde giggling every time dark locks brushed up against her cheeks.

"I forgot the watermelon in the car. Could someone..." Hana shifted her gaze from the grill to the canopy, finally noticing the two love birds rolling around on the blanket. "Oh um, I'll just go get it."

"It's alright, I'll get it Hana." Ana started to get up, leaving her tablet in the chair behind her. She stretched out her arms, smiling when she heard the giggles coming from off to the side.

Hana took off some of the meat, placing the cooked pieces on a plate to rest and taking out the remaining meat from the container to put it on the grill. "Are you sure?"

"I'm sure. I needed to stretch out my legs." A quick glance to the young soldier manning the grill. "You might want to get one of them to put some sunscreen on your shoulders though. They're turning pink." Ana left after watching the amusing display of Hana trying to reach behind to her shoulders with one hand and flipping the meat with the other.

Hana called out to Angela and Fareeha behind her. "Hey, um, I know you guys are busy being in love and all but could one of you two put some more sunscreen on my shoulders? I'm getting crispy."

"Just a moment," called out Angela. The blonde had Fareeha pinned beneath her. One hand had a tanned shoulder pushed down and the other was busy tickling Fareeha's exposed stomach. "I'm not done with you yet." A gentle kiss to soft lips and Angela slowly climbed off her girlfriend. "Just stay right there."

Fareeha nodded, giving Angela a mock salute with the sternest face she could muster. "Understood." She bent her arms behind her head and stayed where she lied. Fareeha was nothing if not patient.

Angela grabbed the bottle of SPF 50 sunscreen on the way to Hana, squeezing some into her hands and rubbing her fingers together to make the sunscreen warmer. "The food smells good."

Any chance we get to eat soon?" Skilled hands went to work on spreading the sunscreen across pink shoulders.

"I'm about to put the vegetables on." Hana transferred the remaining pieces of meat to the plate. She opened the container of vegetables, using the tongs to place them on the grill in nice even rows. "These shouldn't take long to grill. And after I cut up the melon, we can eat." She looked back towards Fareeha. "I know she isn't saying anything about it but Fareeha is probably starving. She was in the water for hours."

"Is that right?" Angela finished applying the sunscreen. She left the bottle next to Hana, walking back to where Fareeha lied. "Was my darling hungry this whole time?" Angela took a seat next to Fareeha, a gentle hand resting on the other woman's toned abdomen.

"Well uh..." Fareeha's stomach decided then and there that it was going to betray her. The growl of hunger could be heard clear across the ocean and Fareeha could tell that Angela felt the deep earthquake rumbling within her stomach. "Maybe just a little."

"Well," started Angela. Her hand slowly made its way up from Fareeha's stomach, leaving a tingling trail along the soldier's neck until it rested on a tan cheek, "I can keep you distracted."

"Oh?"

"Mmhm." A quick kiss to Fareeha's cheek and Angela was back to tickling Fareeha. "See?"

Fareeha tried her best to squirm away, only succeeding in fueling Angela's determination. But it was true, Fareeha was quite distracted. Hunger was the last thing on her mind. Right now, more than anything, she wanted to get back at Angela. Mustering as much willpower as she could, Fareeha managed to steady her hands enough so that she could grab Angela's.

Angela was left wide eyed when she suddenly found herself beneath Fareeha. The woman on top of her had a wide smirk, lowering down on her elbows so they were a hairbreadth width apart. "Actually Angela, this is a wonderful distraction."

Hana had finished placing all the grilled vegetables on another plate. She sneaked a roasted bell pepper from the top and started munching on it. Ana was taking her sweet time coming back with that watermelon. The other two were busy rolling around underneath the canopy to even notice her snacking. She had to admit, it was cute. So she smiled. Because they were so happy, because her friend was happy.

"You guys are just..." Hana shook her head at the sight of the two of them stopping mid-roll to pay attention to what she had to say. "I'm just glad Fareeha won't get all mopey every time you're brought up in conversation."

"H-hana!" Fareeha quickly scrambled off Angela. Her face was heating up rapidly. Diving back into the ocean suddenly seemed *very* appealing.

Angela lied there with her brows furrowed, trying to decipher the meaning behind Hana's words. "Wait a minute." She was quick to sit up, gasping when it clicked. Angela pointed to Hana. "You knew?" And then another revelation. She whipped her head back to Fareeha. "You told her?"

Fareeha could only shrug. "It was easier."

A sigh. "I guess we both thought anything else was easier." A smile. "But, as far as I know, none of that matters anymore." Angela scooted closer to Fareeha, leaning her head on a sure shoulder. "Isn't that right?"

And suddenly all thoughts of jumping into the ocean faded away, Fareeha content to stay by Angela's side.

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"Finally! I thought might have just left with how long you were gone," said Hana. The image of Ana got closer to the canopy.

Ana had the watermelon held under one arm, holding her holo-pad with her other hand. When she got close enough, Hana could see a cheerful Lena talking in the hologram. "*Hey there she is!*" Ana handed Hana both the watermelon and the holo-pad. "Lena wanted to talk to you."

Hana set the watermelon down, focusing on greeting Lena instead. "Hey Lena." A small wave.

"*Hey Hana! So listen to this, I heard that most everyone at Gibraltar is on vacation. So I called Ana to see if that's really the case and would you look at that.*" Lena leaned to the side as if doing so would allow a better view of the beach. "*I haven't been to the beach in a long time. I can't say I'm not jealous.*"

Hana set the holo pad down and got to work on the watermelon. She must have done it a million times before because she made carving into the melon seem like she was slicing through butter.

Lena spotted the plates of food set atop the cooler. "*Now that looks good.*" She leaned back calling out to Winston off in the distance. "*Hey Winston, you think I could transfer over to Gibraltar? They look like they're having a great time out there.*"

A squint and Lena could see Angela and Fareeha in the background. Angela was hugging Fareeha close to her while peppering the soldier's cheek with kisses. "*Oh yeah. Heard those two were together. Very cute if I had to say anything about it.*" Winston's voice echoed from the background, catching Lena's attention. She turned back to look at Hana when he was done speaking. "*Sorry love, looks like I gotta cut this short. Duty calls.*"

Hana smiled as she cut the last of the watermelon. She only said two words to the other woman. Not much of a conversation to begin with. "Nice talking with you Lena."

Lena smiled and waved. "*Bye Hana.*" She leaned over, trying to find Ana. "*Bye Ana, wherever you are. Nice talk we had.*" Lena blew a kiss to the couple in the back ground. "*Stay sweet you two.*" And then she just got up and left, leaving her side of the channel open. "*Hey Winston, I don't think I was kidding about that transfer. Maybe just for a little while?*"

Ana picked up her holo-pad and ended the call. "That one still hasn't learned to slow down."

Hana nodded in agreement. She hadn't known Lena that long but even she could tell that Lena never did things slow. "Well, it's time to eat. Everything's done." She gestured to the platters of watermelon, and grilled meat and vegetables.

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There was nothing left of the food. Everything had been consumed in a blink of an eye. Fareeha and Hana had eaten most it, saving the watermelon for last so they could hold a little contest. Hana had only won because Angela insisted they save some for her and Ana, taking the plate away before Fareeha could grab another piece to match the amount Hana ate.

A stuffed Fareeha was lying on her stomach under the canopy, brown eyes tracking the beginnings of the sunset. "Let's go swimming Angela."

“You can’t be serious. You look like you’re about to explode Fareeha. I’m not going to name any names but I think *someone* ate too much,” said Angela.

“Just give me,” a huff of breath, “...a minute.” Fareeha shifted so she was lying on her back.

“Whether or not I give you a minute to recover isn’t going to help Fareeha.”

“No, no I promise I’ll be good in a minute.”

Angela crossed her arms with a pointed look. “Haven’t you had enough of the water yet?”

Fareeha was slowly getting up into a sitting position. “Well here’s my argument for you.” Another huff of breath. “You haven’t even gone in the water once. What’s the point of wearing that really nice bathing suit if you’re not going to go swimming with the love of your life?”

An arched eyebrow. “Love of my life are you?”

“Undoubtedly.” Fareeha nodded knowingly.

Angela felt her heart pounding at Fareeha’s sentiments. “All right, all right let’s go.” Angela stood up in one fluid motion, bending over to help Fareeha up. “Hana, want to come with?”

Hana, hurriedly took off her hat, sunglasses, and flip flops. “Yeah, it’ll be fun to see that one flop around in the water.”

“Hey.” Yet another huff of breath. “That’s not going to happen Hana.” Fareeha finally stood on her feet. She had an arm wrapped around Angela’s shoulders, leaning on the woman for support.

“Then prove it.” The young soldier took off in a sprint, not bothering to slow down until she got to the water.

“Come on let’s teach her a lesson Angela.” Fareeha started leading them towards the water.

Angela stopped them for a minute to look back. “Want to join us Ana?”

“You three have fun. I’m going to take a short nap while the sun is perfect.” The older woman dragged her chair into the sand and placed her hat over her face to block out the light.

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It was pitch black when the three finally emerged from the water. Dripping wet, they raced back to their spot on the beach, the canopy illuminated by the automatic light fixtures. Angela and Fareeha took to towel-drying each other off, enjoying the opportunity to muss up each other’s hair.

Hana picked up her towel and hurriedly passed it through her hair before pulling it back into a bun. She quickly found her backpack and plopped herself under the canopy. “I’ve been waiting all day for this.” A slew of fireworks came tumbling out of the bag when she dumped the entirety of its contents onto the blanket.

“When you said you were going to bring fireworks, I just thought you meant a pack of sparklers.” Fareeha bent down to inspect the array of fireworks. “This is impressive.”

“Well yeah I brought sparklers.” Hana held up the bundled pack of sparklers from the pile in front of her. “But it’s not fireworks unless you get to see something explode midair.” She reached into the front pocket of her bag and pulled out some lighters. “Let’s get started.”

In the middle of the cool, pitch-black night, fireworks lit up the sky. Fareeha and Angela watched

the show from where they stood in the sand, the sparklers they held the only dedicated lighting. Hana and Ana were off in the distance lighting up the fireworks in record speeds. The sound of Hana's excited exclamations echoed across the beach.

Angela took Fareeha's empty hand in her own, lightly tracing the hand with a thumb. "I love you."

A sparkler illuminated smile. "I love you too."

Chapter End Notes

And there you go. It's all finished now. I just want to thank everyone for reading my story. I look forward to finishing more stories with you guys.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!